

**FIRST
PRINCIPLES**
**A STUDY OF THE ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST**

BAPTISMS

BOOK FOUR

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THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Hebrews 6:1-2 *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the **doctrine of baptisms**, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Now that we have established a firm foundation in repentance from dead works and in faith toward God, we can begin to lay the foundation stone of the doctrine of baptisms. Notice that the word "baptisms" is plural. This is due to the fact that there are five different baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. These five are as follows:

1. The baptism of John, also called the baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4).
2. The baptism into the body of Christ, which occurs at regeneration (1 Corinthians 12:13).
3. Water baptism, sometimes called Christian baptism (Acts 2:38).
4. Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5, 8).
5. The baptism with fire, or the baptism of purification (Luke 3:16-17).

In subsequent lessons, we will be sharing an in-depth look at the last four baptisms. We will briefly cover John's baptism in this lesson. But first, we need a good, working definition of "baptism."

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. What we read in the English translation are words that convey the same basic meaning as the original Greek words intended. For example, the Greek word "agape" is . basically equivalent to the English word "love."

However, there are some Greek words that have no comparable English words. In these instances, transliteration may be used rather than translation. Transliteration means to spell words in the letters of another alphabet that represent the same sounds in the original alphabet. When the English Bible was being translated, there was no English equivalent for the Greek words "baptisma" or "baptizo," so transliteration was used to form the words "baptism" and "baptize."

Baptism is literally the process of immersion, submersion and emergence. It means "to dip, to plunge, to cover completely." An example of this would be that of dyeing a garment. A garment of one color is baptized into the dye of a different color. The garment must be completely immersed, or submerged, into the new color in order to totally change. This total immersion is biblical baptism. When we are born again, we are baptized-totally immersed-into the, body of Christ. When we are water baptized, we are completely covered by water. When we are Spirit baptized, we are totally immersed in the Holy Spirit. Biblical baptism is always total immersion.

Studying John's baptism will help us grasp the relation between repentance, faith and water baptism. John's message was *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:2). John preached the gospel of the kingdom – the sphere of

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF BAPTISM

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

God's rule and reign. Entrance into this kingdom required repentance, faith, baptism and obedience. John demanded proof of repentance, saying, *"Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance"* (Matthew 3:8). He then gave the people practical ways to show their repentance (Luke 3:3-18).

However, John's ministry was temporary and transitional (John 3:27-30). It came between the Old and New Covenants with the purpose of breaking the old traditional bondage and preparing the way for the Messiah. Although John's ministry was effective in preparing the way for Jesus, his baptism was insufficient after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 19:1-6 *And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 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. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*

This passage shows that there was something lacking in John's baptism. It was a temporary baptism of repentance through which people exercised faith in the coming Messiah. There was genuine repentance involved. The axe had been laid to the root and there was evidence of true repentance. However, we know that repentance from dead works is not enough to be born again – there must also be faith toward God, which means faith in the completed work of Jesus. This necessitates Christian baptism which identifies the believer with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. The baptism into the body of Christ encompasses and supersedes John's baptism.

It is interesting to note that the Ephesians in the above passage were baptized into the body of Christ, baptized in water and baptized in the Holy Spirit almost simultaneously. It is not necessary to tarry for a long time to receive the fullness of God.

AN OVERVIEW OF BAPTISMS

For the rest of this lesson, we will present an overview of baptism into the body (which occurs when repentance and faith lead to regeneration), baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. We will deal with the baptism in fire later because it concerns the ongoing purification of the believer. For now, we will take an in-depth look at the correlation and comparisons between the baptisms into the body, water and Spirit.

First, we must see that these baptisms all involve the following:

1. An element (what you are baptized into)
2. Conditions (who can be baptized)

3. A baptizer (who baptizes)
4. A purpose (why you are baptized).

Baptisms				
<u>Element</u>	<u>Conditions</u>	<u>Baptizer</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
1. Body	Repentance and Faith	Holy Spirit	Regeneration	1 Cor. 12:13
2. Water	Believer	Man	Separation, Circumcision	Mat. 28:19
3. Holy Spirit	Believer	Jesus	Power and gifts	Luke 3:16; Acts 1:8, 2:4
4. Fire	Believer	Jesus	Purification and testing	Mat. 3:11-12; 1 Pe. 4:12-14

Baptism into the body of Christ – This baptism occurs when we are born again by meeting the conditions of repentance from dead works and faith toward God. The one who baptizes us into the body is the Holy Spirit. It is important to understand this, because many confuse this baptism with the baptism **in** the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized **into** one body."* When we are born again we are baptized **by** the Holy Spirit **into** the body of Christ. This is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in water – This occurs **after** we are born again. Upon examining all the Scriptures concerning water baptism, you will find that it is a believer's baptism; it is for those who have placed their faith in Jesus and are following Him. For this reason, it is not for unbelievers, including infants. We will learn in later lessons that water baptism is **not** simply symbolic. There is a real work done in the waters.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit – This occurs after salvation and usually after water baptism, although not necessarily. As we saw in Acts 19 concerning the Ephesians, these baptisms can occur almost simultaneously. We must understand that the One who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ. This is one way we differentiate between the baptism into the body of Christ and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body. According to Luke 3:16, Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.

We need a much broader understanding of salvation; it involves more than the new birth. Being born again is the entrance into salvation. We **are** saved when we are born again (in our spirit), but we are **being** saved (in our soul) and we **will be** saved (in our body). There is an ongoing process of salvation involving renewal, deliverance and healing. We need all God has for us in order to be all He wants us to be. This includes all three baptisms.

THE KINGDOM PACKAGE

We know that it takes repentance and faith to be born again. In Acts 16:30-31, when the repentant jailer asked, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*, there was only one thing left for him to do: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.."*

However, we know that God wants to give us more than just the initial experience of salvation. Regeneration is the greatest miracle imaginable, but we must move into all God has for us. We see an example of this on the day of Pentecost. The people in Jerusalem had seen and heard the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. When Peter preached, they were convicted of sin and they asked, "*What shall we do?*" (Acts 2:37). They were not just asking for forgiveness of sins. They were not just seeking to be born again. They wanted to know how to be like the disciples, how to have what they had, how to change kingdoms.

Peter told them, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). This was the first message of the church! We call it the "kingdom package" because it shows us how to change kingdoms. This message – this three-fold witness – is seen throughout the Scriptures.

THE THREE-FOLD WITNESS

1 John 5:7-8 *For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*

The witness of the blood is necessary for salvation for "*...without shedding of blood there is no remission*" of sin (Hebrews 9:22). Thank the Lord, the blood of Jesus redeemed us (1 Peter 1:18-19) and cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). When we repent of sin and place our faith in the work of Jesus, His blood makes us white as snow and the Holy Spirit baptizes us into His body.

The witness of the water is also necessary for salvation (1 Peter 3:21). Remember, salvation is much bigger than regeneration. We are saved from hell and our sins when we are born again, but salvation from our flesh and the world necessitates water baptism. We'll deal with this in a later lesson.

Furthermore, the witness of the Spirit is essential to salvation. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again (Romans 8:9). "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*" (Romans 8:16). We know we are in Christ and He is in us only by the witness of the Spirit (1 John 4:13). Moreover, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, by completing the package gives us supernatural power (Acts 1:8) and supernatural gifts (Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12).

When we receive this kingdom package – the three-fold witness – we are on our way to spiritual growth. We are not perfect yet, but we are on our way to our goal: conformity to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). It is impossible to be like Jesus without this three-fold witness in our lives! Even Jesus, the Son of God, needed it. Of course, Jesus did not need to be born again; He was the Son of God. However, He was still baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22). How can we be like Him except we follow His example?

The following is a chart showing some examples of the three-fold witness as seen throughout the Bible:

Scripture	Three-fold Witness			
	Subject	Blood	Water	Spirit
Acts 2:38	Church (Pentecost)	Blood	Water	Spirit
Luke 3:21-22	Jesus	no need	*	*
Acts 8:12-17	Samaritans	*	*	*
Acts 9:17-18	Saul (Paul)	*	*	*
Acts 10:44-48	Cornelius (Gentiles)	*	*	*
Acts 19:1-7	Ephesians	*	*	*
1 Cor. 10:1-2	Children of Israel	*	*	*
Exodus 40	Priests/Tabernacle	*	*	*
Ruth 1, 3	Ruth	*	*	*
Eze. 16:8-9	Israel	*	*	*
John 3:1-8	Nicodemus	*	*	*
1 John 5:7-8	3-fold witness	*	*	*

Let us look at some of these Scripture passages in more detail. We have already examined 1 John 5:7-8 and the following examples: Jesus in Luke 3, the church in Acts 2:38 and the Ephesians in Acts 19. Please read the other Scripture passages from Acts. They are self-explanatory and we will not cover them in this lesson.

John 3:1-8 records the incredible confrontation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Jesus said, *"...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* However, the Lord does not want us to be satisfied in simply gazing at His Kingdom; He wants us to enter it! Jesus went on to say, *"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* We must follow the example of Jesus and receive the entire kingdom package – blood, water and Spirit – in order to enter the kingdom walk and power here on earth.

The remainder of the Scripture passages in our chart involve Old Testament types of the three-fold witness. A type is a shadow, a symbol or representation of something or someone. For example, the Passover lamb is a type of Christ; it symbolically speaks of His death and of redemption through His blood. Let's look at some types which represent the three-fold witness.

The three-fold witness can be seen in the children of Israel. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 shows how the children of Israel passing through the sea is a type of water baptism. They passed through the blood of the passover lamb which represents the work of the blood of Christ in regeneration (Exodus 12). They passed through the water of the Red Sea which represents the water of baptism (Exodus 19). Then they passed through the cloud which represents the Holy Spirit (Exodus 19).

A very clear type of the three-fold witness can be seen in the way the priests were prepared in order to minister in the Tabernacle of Moses. In Exodus 40:6, 29, we see that first, burnt offerings had to be sacrificed on the altar. This shedding of blood which was placed on the priests, prefigured Christ's sacrifice. Next, the priests had to wash in the laver (Exodus 40:12, 30-33), which speaks of water baptism. Lastly, the priests had to be anointed with oil (Exodus 40:13-15), which is a type of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

BAPTISMS ONE

The last type of the three-fold witness which we will examine is seen in the life of Ruth. First, we see that she was called out and that she entered into covenant (chapter 1). In chapter 3, we see that she was washed in water and anointed with oil, which are types of water baptism and Spirit baptism.

CONCLUSION It is exciting to see how God reveals truth in His Word. We have seen the three-fold witness of baptism into the body of Christ, baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit throughout the entire Bible. We have seen it in the life of Jesus as well as in the early church and the teachings of the apostles. Lastly, we see it in the church today. It is our prayerful desire that this three-fold witness will also be in your life.

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: What does the word "baptism" mean?

"Baptism" means to immerse or cover completely.

Acts 8:38-39 ... *Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away... .*

Question 2: What are the main baptisms mentioned in the New Testament?

- a. Baptism into the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

- b. Baptism in water.

Luke 3:21 *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.*

- c. Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

John 1:33 "... He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

- d. Baptism of fire.

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to them 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 with fire."*

Question 3: What is the three-fold witness?

The three-fold witness is the kingdom package of spiritual experiences that is necessary for Christian life and growth. The three-fold witness is made up of:

- a. The witness of the blood.

Hebrews 9:22 ... *without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

- b. The witness of the water.

1 Peter 3:21 *There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely 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.*

- c. The witness of the Spirit.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

BAPTISMS ONE

HOMEWORK

1. What is the literal definition of "baptism?"
2. What was John's baptism?
3. Given the three elements-the body of Christ, the water and the Holy Spirit – what are the three **conditions** and the three **purposes** for each, respectively?

<u>element</u>	<u>condition</u>	<u>purpose</u>
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4. What three spiritual experiences complete the "kingdom package?"
5. What are the three witnesses of the kingdom package?
6. Has God used this lesson to show you any need in your life? Please explain.

BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

We have clearly seen from the previous lesson that there is a three-fold witness consisting of baptism into the body of Christ (salvation through the **blood**), baptism in water (through immersion) and baptism in the Holy Spirit (being immersed in the **Spirit**). These experiences are essential to Christian life for without them we cannot fully enter into the kingdom walk (John 3:1-8).

INTRODUCTION

Through the next several lessons we want to examine closely each of these three doctrines of the three-fold witness mentioned in I John 5:8. The first will be **baptism into the body of Christ**.

We need to realize the importance of what really takes place when, by faith, we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. When we were born again we were:

THE ACT OF REGENERATION

1. Forgiven of all sin.
2. Pronounced not guilty, free from all judgment.
3. Given a new heart (new nature) to serve God.
4. Given the Holy Spirit to reside within us.
5. Baptized by the Holy Spirit into a new family (the body of Christ).

At that moment of eternal choice, when a person turns from going his own way and appropriates the atoning work of Jesus on the cross, the awesome miracle of regeneration takes place. Through the blood of Jesus we were washed from our sin and given access by the Spirit into the body of Christ. We became part of a new family. We were taken out of the family of this world and placed into the family of God. We were actually translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one – body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

Colossians 1:13 *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*

This baptism into the body of Christ is a reality which is sometimes misunderstood and reduced to the perspective of "Now that you are a Christian, you must attend church because you are part of the body of Christ." Salvation is much more than church attendance; it deals with **complete immersion** into the body of Christ. **We are separated from the old and totally immersed into the new.** This is a radical change to an opposite position from where we once were. The Holy Spirit leads us into this baptism where we literally experience a change of family and kingdom, with God as our Father and Lord.

The word used in the original Greek for “body” throughout the New Testament is “soma.” Although it is used in many applications, “soma” refers to “the body, as of a man, the instrument of life.” (It is interesting to note that “soma” is derived from the word “sozo” which means to “save, that is to deliver and protect.” “Sozo” is one of the words translated as “save” through the New Testament.) Just

WHAT HAVE I BECOME A PART OF?

as our body has many parts, so does the body of Christ. The “parts” of His body are every born again believer.

1 Corinthians 10:17 *For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

Romans 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

The body of Christ is the expression of Jesus' life on this earth. It is also called the Church (Colossians 1:24) and God's family (John 1:12). It is composed of a people who are knit together by God's love, led by His Spirit and who carry out His purposes. We are presented many times in the writings of Paul as "soma Christou," the body of Christ in the earth (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:12). The body (soma) is an organism composed of members who function in unity under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:15, 5:23, Colossians 1:18).

The whole foundation of the body is Christ Jesus Himself (1 Corinthians 3:10-11). By Him the Church is held and sustained together. In order to preserve it from false teaching and schisms, the Church must be viewed as an organism rather than an organization. The Church is not just a cold, lifeless institution, but a living relationship where the head and the body are mutually related in love and truth. This is true organism and life. We cannot simply decide to join ourselves to each other, but it takes a work of the Holy Spirit to join us into one body.

Our very lifestyle is based upon our relationship with Christ. The Scriptures state that we are not to relate to one another after the flesh (natural relationships), but in the Spirit, just as we relate to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). We do not relate to Christ in a natural sense, but in a spiritual sense. Even so, relationship in the body of Christ is a spiritual relationship with one another. This is brought out clearer in regards to the Lord's Supper (communion). The bread mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 refers not only to the body of our Lord Jesus, but also to us as His body. When we partake of the bread in communion, we are partaking and communing with the Lord and one another in that bread.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 ... *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

The body is also the place where each part is fitly joined together in a love relationship. One of the purposes of this relationship is maturity. When every joint and part of the body works together, the result is bodily growth, maturity in love and stability.

Ephesians 4:14-16 *That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine ... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head Christ-from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

The body of Christ is the instrument of God on the earth. Jesus gave us a very interesting picture of the purpose and function of His body in Luke Chapter 19:12-13. The "*servants*" (who represent believers) of "*a certain nobleman*" (representing Jesus) were instructed to "*Do business till I come.*" What is this "business" which Jesus is asking us to do? In Luke Chapter 4, Jesus reads His purpose and ours out of Isaiah:

Luke 4:18-19 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD."*

The body of Christ has a definite purpose and function: to be a manifestation of Jesus Christ on the earth.

When God created the world, He placed man in a perfect, sinless environment and called everything He created, "Very good" (Genesis 1:31). Adam was in an ideal setting and had a relationship with God that had not yet been marred by sin. Think of the fellowship and communion that Adam enjoyed with God. Yet God looked on all of this and for the first time said, "It is not good." What was not good? It was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). So, God created a woman for Adam.

CAN I STAND ALONE?

What is this saying to us? God created us with a need for other people. Yes, we need Him, but we also need each other. We cannot stand alone. We must realize that when we entered into the new covenant, we entered into covenant relationship with the body of Christ as well as with the Lord Jesus (Ephesians 2:14-22).

The moment you accepted the Lord Jesus into your heart, you became a member of the body of Christ. This is not an option, but an accomplished fact. Think of it this way: there is a place in the body that God has prepared just for you (1 Corinthians 12:18). If you elect not to pursue God's purpose for your life, the whole body of Christ is affected (1 Corinthians 12:14-30).

Perhaps you have walked hurriedly across a room at night and "discovered" that new chair or table with your toe. Now in relationship to the whole body, the toe is relatively insignificant, but if you "stub" it, your whole body hurts. Romans 12:5 tells us that we are "... *members of one another.*" If one of us hurts, we all hurt. Likewise, if one is blessed, we are all blessed. The Word of God tells us to encourage and edify one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), to pray for each other (Ephesians 6:18) and to comfort one another (2 Corinthians 1:3-6). There are no "lone rangers" in the body of Christ; we need each other and should be integrally involved with one another.

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

WHAT DOES FELLOWSHIP REALLY MEAN?

What is the “fellowship” that was considered so important by the early church historian as to be listed with apostles' doctrine and prayer? The Greek word used here is "koinonia," from which two words were translated: "fellowship" and "communion". It is best defined "as companionship, mutual sharing, to have in common, joint participation and partnership." If we apply this into our daily lives, we can readily see that there is not only love, relationship and interaction with our Lord Jesus, but also with the members of His body.

The essence and origin of true transparent fellowship within the body of Christ is our love relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit. In order for real fellowship to be alive and active, it must be directed toward God first. It is relationship we are "called" to.

1 Corinthians 1:9 (Amp) ... *you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

This is the very center and focal point of our fellowship one with another.

1 John 1:3 *That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

This vertical relationship and joint participation with God is the governing factor for our horizontal relationships with others.

Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV) *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

Each of us is joined to Christ and to each other through the new birth. We demonstrate this union by sharing with each other what we have for the benefit of everyone (Acts 4:32).

God, in His infinite wisdom, made provision for ministering to the saints by creating a way that believers can be emptied from vessel to vessel. Fellowship provides a very practical means of getting to know and appreciate one another. Jesus desires for fellowship to become a way of life to us. There is a great joy in real fellowship as we meet and share spiritual, practical and social needs.

God takes joy in variety and diversity and has provided many different ways, means, places and opportunities for the body to fellowship. We can fellowship by:

1. Meeting in our homes Acts 2:46
2. Meeting each other's needs Acts 4:35, 1 Corinthians 12
3. Communicating with one another..... Ephesians 4:29
4. Being given to hospitality Romans 12:13
5. Sharing spiritual abilities 1 Peter 4:10
6. Sharing our time and strength with others 1 Thessalonians 5:14

BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

7. Praying and interceding for others Ephesians 6:18
8. Loving each other in the Spirit..... 1 Peter 4:8
9. Comforting one another..... 2 Corinthians 1:4

It is interesting to note that all of the above are **giving** relationships. So it is with true fellowship. We are born again to be like Christ and to be joint participants in His nature, the foundation of which is love and giving.

We can all experience body life or fellowship as an ongoing way of life. None of us has a complete revelation or experience of Christ. God has purposed that what we lack will be supplied to us by other members in the body of Christ. We are part of one another. We really do need each other!

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: What is the body of Christ?

- a. The body of Christ is made up of those who have been baptized by the Spirit into Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

- b. The body of Christ is made up of many members that have become one bread and one body.

1 Corinthians 10:17 *For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

- c. The body of Christ is made up of those who recognize Jesus as the head of the Church.

Colossians 1:18 *And He is the head of the body, the church*

- d. The body of Christ is the fullness of Christ Jesus expressed in the earth.

Ephesians 1:22-23 *... and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Question 2: How do we become a part of the body of Christ?

The body of Christ is made up of those who have changed kingdoms by receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*

Question 3: What is Christian fellowship?

Fellowship is companionship, sharing and communion. As Christians, we fellowship with God and each other.

1 John 1:3 *That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

Question 4: Should Christians need each other?

Yes, as members of the body of Christ we need the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the body, and we need the other members of His body.

Ephesians 4:15-16 *... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head Christ-from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

1 Corinthians 12:20-21 *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."*

HOMEWORK

1. Who baptizes us into the body of Christ? (Please include reference.)
2. What does it mean to be baptized into the body of Christ?
3. How do we partake of one another in celebration of the Lord's Supper?
4. What is the original Greek word for fellowship? What does it mean?
5. List five opportunities for true fellowship.
6. From your own experience, please explain your understanding of and commitment to the body of Christ.

Since we have a basic understanding of the term "baptism" and specifically of the baptism we experienced at regeneration (the baptism into the body of Christ), we now want to examine the truth of "water baptism." In the past, this truth has been overemphasized as well as underemphasized, but there is truth in water baptism that is being restored to the Church. Baptism is overemphasized when it is considered necessary for regeneration. Baptism is underemphasized when it is made a purely symbolic act through which you join a local church. Baptism has been so ritualized, watered down and presented as totally symbolic, that it has little significant meaning within the lives of believers in many churches.

INTRODUCTION

It is crucial to understand that there is only one gospel. The gospel of Christ should never be divided, but responded to as one message. Repentance, water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are parts of that whole gospel, and each requires a response on our part. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost people asked, "What shall we do?" He replied, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). We must not cut out any part of the full gospel message (kingdom package).

There are several examples in the Old Testament which clearly show the importance of water baptism to New Testament believers. Notice first of all in the following passage the two references to baptism (in the cloud and in the sea) when Moses and the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt.

EXAMPLES OF WATER BAPTISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea... .*

When God commissioned Moses to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt (a type of the world), He led them through several experiences in order to separate and cleanse them from Egypt. Initially, He saved them when the death angel passed over the land of Egypt in judgment. The blood of the lamb which was placed on the lintel (doorpost) of their homes represents our salvation experience by the blood of Jesus Christ (Exodus 12:21-27). Indeed, Christ is our passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, they found themselves trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh. No amount of self-effort could save them; they had to throw themselves on the mercy of God and seek His deliverance. Here we find a picture of the need for death to self and a complete reliance upon God. God rolled the waters back, the Israelites passed through (baptism), and the waters closed over Pharaoh's army. "So the LORD saved Israel that day..." (Exodus 14:30). The same water that brought deliverance also cut them off from going back to the bondage of Egypt. They were delivered and separated from Egypt (the world) and were given a new land (new citizenship) with a new identity (they were God's sanctified people). They received a completely new lifestyle (a new way of living), that of total trust in the Lord.

Another type of water baptism is seen clearly in the life of Noah (Genesis 6-8) and is best described in the following New Testament passage:

BAPTISMS THREE

1 Peter 3:20-21 ... *who formerly were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely 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...*

Noah entered the ark prepared for the salvation of his family through the only door, which represents Jesus Christ (John 10:9). They were delivered through the water from that evil age and brought into a new world. The water brought them out of the old and into the new where they were separated from the past. They had a new beginning, a new identity and a new lifestyle.

EXAMPLES OF WATER BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus was separated unto the plan and purpose of God from eternity, but His ministry on earth began at the time of water baptism. When He came up from the waters of baptism, He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Father spoke from heaven and said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:13-17). Jesus was holy, yet even He was baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness."

The early church immediately baptized those who received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 10:44-48, 19:5). On the day of Pentecost those who were convicted of their sin asked, *"What shall we do?"* Peter responded, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ..."* (Acts 2:38).

When Philip preached the message of the kingdom of God to the people of Samaria, they responded in one accord to his message by believing and being baptized (Acts 8:5-12). Philip was then led by the Spirit to leave Samaria to witness to an Ethiopian eunuch. After Philip had fully explained the gospel, the eunuch asked to be baptized. The message of Jesus Christ was immediately followed by water baptism (Acts 8:26-39).

After Saul's conversion and healing, Ananias told him to arise and be baptized (Acts 9:17-18). When the Philippian jailer was saved, he was immediately baptized (Acts 16:33).

We see from these examples that the early church took water baptism very seriously. This was because of the Lord's example and His direct commands. Jesus commissioned the church to *"Go ... make disciples ... baptizing them ... teaching them..."* (Matthew 28:19-20). This shows us that obedience plays an important role in water baptism.

OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD

Water baptism is an act of obedience on the part of the believer whereby he testifies of genuine repentance and faith and acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ. If Jesus is Lord, then water baptism means more than just a dip in the water. It was commanded by the Lord for specific purposes and a true believer has a desire to fulfill His commands.

Salvation does not just consist of "coming to Jesus as Savior;" it also requires an understanding of Jesus as **Lord of all** (Romans 10:9-10). Water baptism is an acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus Christ (Luke 6:46). As one stands before the waters of baptism, he is acknowledging that his life has been completely given over to Jesus as King to rule and reign in his life. More than a confession, it is a definite action we take to show all the world that we have changed kingdoms and the Lord Jesus Christ now has command over our lives.

Before we were saved we were citizens of the kingdom of darkness; now we are part of the kingdom of light (1 Peter 2:9). God is our Father and Jesus Christ is our Lord. By being baptized we announce that we are no longer in bondage to Satan or the world. We were formerly slaves to sin, but now we are slaves to God (Romans 6:20-22).

Water baptism is the physical demonstration of our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This identification means that what is true of Jesus is true of us. When He died, we died; when He was buried, we were buried; when He arose, we arose. Identification is a declaration of the reality of the work of the cross in our lives. The epistle to the Romans explains the work of the cross in the believer and exhorts us to live as though dead to sin. The old man (who we were before salvation) is dead and we demonstrate this by being buried with Christ in baptism.

IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS CHRIST

Romans 6:6-7 *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 6:11-12 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, ... do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*

Romans 6:14 *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

Romans 6:18 *And having been set free from sin*

Romans 6:22 *But now having been set free from sin ...*

The power of sin has been broken in our lives through the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. He came "... to preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). This work of redemption and deliverance is a finished work. Nothing can be added or taken away from that which Jesus accomplished. However, the revelation of this work must be realized in each believer's life. Baptism is the place where we declare the power of sin broken away from our lives. "*Repent ... be baptized ... for the remission of sins ...*" (Acts 2:38). This is a work of the Holy Spirit; all we do is walk in it daily.

Romans 6:3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*

BAPTISMS THREE

Christian baptism in water is, first, a burial in a grave of water; and second, a resurrection out of that grave into a new life that is lived unto God in righteousness. Through repentance and faith we have agreed with God that we are dead in trespasses and sins. Through faith in Christ's atonement we see ourselves (according to God's Word) to be dead with Him. This means that our past life, our old Adamic nature, and all our sins are dead and gone, covered by the blood of Jesus. We died with Christ and were raised with Him to newness of life. We are totally new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15).

Now notice these verses: "... *How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ... 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 ... Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 6:2, 7-8, 11).

It should be obvious that something has died and that "something" is all that we were in Adam, all that we were before we were saved. It is very important that we understand this principle: we come to the waters of baptism dead to all that we were. The old man is absolutely dead! Now when something is dead, you bury it! In water baptism we bury our old man; we bury who we were before we met Jesus. In this way we are identifying with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

Romans 6:4-5 *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.*

Colossians 2:12 *... 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.*

Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we also experience a springing forth from the dead to walk in newness of life in the Spirit. We are free to be raised as brand new people by the power of the Holy Spirit and are quickened by a whole new life principle: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2).

We may draw another example: as Jesus hung on the cross, He had our sin placed on Him. He died, making perfect atonement for man's sinful condition. On the third day He arose from the dead, triumphed over Satan, broke free from the bondage of sin that was placed on Him at the cross, and now lives in unbroken friendship with the Father. Likewise, as we partake in water baptism, we share in Jesus' burial and triumphant resurrection.

**SEPARATED FROM
THE WORLD/
SANCTIFIED UNTO
GOD**

In most foreign countries where other religions are dominant, a new believer may confess Christianity without much rejection from his family. However, this is not so with water baptism! The line is drawn at water baptism; he has ceased to be family and is treated as an outcast. They recognize the genuineness of his Christian confession when he is baptized in water.

Just as the children of Israel could look back across the waters of the Red Sea to see their old life, similarly the waters of baptism become the waters of separation for us. Our old lifestyle is buried in the water; all our former ways are left behind; we are washed clean of the world and its influence in our lives. The line has been drawn; there is no going back.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Romans 6:4 ... *even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who 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.*

Water baptism announces our new beginning. We recognize the reality of Christ's cleansing, the old lifestyle is buried, we are dead to the world's pull and influence, and we have a heart after God. We have chosen to make Jesus Lord and to walk in a new lifestyle by the power of His resurrected life. Our lives have new hope, new power and new direction.

Colossians 2:11-12 *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, 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.*

**THE CIRCUMCISION
OF CHRIST**

To understand these verses more clearly we must understand a little about Old Testament circumcision. Circumcision was for the specific purpose of removing flesh as a sign of covenant with God. We sometimes overlook the fact that flesh was actually removed. God intends that water baptism, the sign of the new covenant, be an experience in our lives which releases faith in the work of Christ to deliver believers from the power of the flesh. Just as a the flesh was buried in the flood of Noah's day and in the Red Sea, so God intends that the power of the flesh be broken through faith in Jesus' work as we enter the waters of baptism.

Some people have areas in their lives that they have never been able to overcome. This may be due to not recognizing this provision of the cross – the circumcision of the heart.

One of the principles in the doctrine of sanctification is that we are not only set apart **from** "something" but also set apart **unto** "something else". This same principle holds true for the believer separated from the world by the waters of baptism. We are to walk not only in newness of life but also in a life that is separated unto God. Water baptism shows our commitment unto God and unto righteousness.

**PRAISE GOD FOR
WHAT HE HAS
ACCOMPLISHED!!**

BAPTISMS THREE

Romans 6:11 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 6:13 *... present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: Why should we be baptized in water?

- a. We should be baptized because Jesus commanded it.

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."*

- b. We should be baptized because it is an acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Luke 6:46 *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"*

- c. We should be baptized because it is a love response on our part.

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*

- d. We should be baptized because it is the sign of the new covenant relationship.

Colossians 2:11-12 *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, 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.*

Question 2: Who can be baptized?

Water baptism is for all who repent of sin and dead works and place their faith in Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:38 *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Mark 16:16 *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*

Question 3: How should we be baptized?

Since the word "baptism" means "complete immersion," we should be baptized by complete immersion in the water.

John 3:23 *Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.*

Acts 8:38-39 *... And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away... .*

HOMEWORK

1. How has baptism been:
overemphasized?

underemphasized?

2. Give one explanation of a type of baptism in the Old Testament.

3. Complete the following: *"Therefore we were _____ with Him through _____ into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in _____."*

4. What is the impact of baptism in some countries of the world?

5. What does water baptism mean to you personally?

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part One)

INTRODUCTION

Having discovered that the power of sin has been broken in our lives by the spiritual work of regeneration (baptism into the body of Christ) and water baptism, we must now determine to walk in this truth daily. Since this walk is a spiritual walk in grace (Galatians 3:3), we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is one thing to come out of the world, but it is another to get the world out of you. When the Israelites came out of the wilderness into the promised land, they were faced with many battles. God had given them the land, but they still had to possess it. Canaan, in this example, is a type of the victorious Christian life. The principle involved is that what God has given must be appropriated through spiritual warfare.

All of us have sensed a need for a closer walk with the Lord, for the power to live a victorious Christian life, and for a greater understanding of the Word of God. The key to this power and ability is recognizing, respecting, and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This baptism completes the three-fold witness (1 John 5:7-8), or what is sometimes called the "kingdom package."

The world rightfully expects a demonstration of the supernatural from the believer since the supernatural walk validates the Christian life. This supernatural lifestyle is commanded by the Lord (Mark 16:15-18). It is the normal Christian life that He expects us to experience. Anything less than a supernatural, Spirit-filled life is sub-normal!

John 14:12 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The Lord does not command us to walk this lifestyle without providing the grace and power to do so. The disciples were told to remain in Jerusalem until they were "... *endued with power from on high*" (Luke 24:49). Likewise, we need to be endued with that same power. Let us begin by looking at the person of the Holy Spirit, the provider of that power. In the next lesson we will learn how to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Biblically, we understand that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The term "trinity" is not a biblical term, but it is a biblical truth which simply means that God is revealed in three Persons. There are not three Gods (polytheism); there is one God (1 Timothy 2:5) who is revealed in three Persons: the Three-in-One (1 John 5:7-8). How do we know that there is one God who is revealed in three Persons? First of all, this truth is evidenced in the Scriptures by the plural names of God (such as Elohim, which is the plural of the name El). Secondly, many Scriptures speak of God as a plurality.

THE PERSON AND PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let *Us* make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness" In Genesis 3:22 the Lord said, "Behold, the man has become like one of *Us*" In Isaiah 6:8 the Lord said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for *Us*?"

We know that the Bible specifically says that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). However, the Bible states that the Father is God (Romans 1:7), the Son is God (Hebrews 1:8) and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). The Son became flesh in order to reveal the glory of God to man (John 1:14). All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him (Colossians 2:9). The Holy Spirit came to testify of Jesus (John 15:26) and to glorify Him (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit is the particular person of the Trinity through whom the entire Godhead works in us (John 15:26).

The Holy Spirit **must** be recognized as God, not a mere influence or power spoken of as "it." Scripturally the Holy Spirit is spoken of as "He," indicating that He is a real person.

John 16:13-14 "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. **He** will glorify Me, for **He** will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

The Holy Spirit has attributes that are characteristic of God alone. The Holy Spirit is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), all-powerful (Luke 1:35), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7) and omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). The Holy Spirit also has definite characteristics that show He is a person:

1. Knowledge1 Corinthians 2:10-11
2. Will1 Corinthians 12:11
3. MindRomans 8:27
4. LoveRomans 15:30
5. GriefEphesians 4:30

God has used names and symbols in the Word to reveal His Spirit to man. The examples listed below reveal the reason why some people refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it." Symbols are used to describe the various operations of the Holy Spirit much the same way the Lord Jesus is described as a lamb, a lion, etc.

1. Spirit of Truth John 16:13
2. Helper John 14:26
3. Wind and Fire Acts 2:2-4
4. Water John 7:38-39
5. Dove John 1:32

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16:7-14 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part One)

judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

We know that the Holy Spirit is God, so He has been present and active in the universe since it began. However, Jesus indicated that it was necessary for Him to return to heaven so that the Holy Spirit could be poured out in a special way. This outpouring occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Since that time, the Holy Spirit has been working in the world, in the church and in individual believers. The following chart lists some of the major activities of the Holy Spirit.

The Work of the Holy Spirit	
In the World:	Convicts of sin John 16:8-9
	Convicts of the need for righteousness..... John 16:10
	Convicts of judgment John 16:11
In the Church:	Baptizes into the body of Christ..... 1 Cor. 12:13
	Dwells in the church..... Ephesians 2:22
	Manifests supernatural gifts..... 1 Cor. 12:7-11
	Glorifies Christ..... John 16:14
In the Believer:	Dwells in the believer..... 1 Cor. 6:19
	Reveals truth 1 Cor. 2:10
	Imparts supernatural gifts 1 Cor. 12:7-11
	Manifests fruit..... Gal. 5:22-23
	Guidance..... John 16:13
	Comfort..... Acts 9:31
	Sanctification Romans 15:16
	Helps in weakness Romans 8:26
Intercession Romans 6:27	

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not reside permanently within any person. He came upon people to anoint them to do specific tasks for specific times. The Old Testament prophets were anointed by the Spirit of God to speak forth the words of God. These prophets, "... moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21), spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh and that the Spirit would be **in** them (Ezekiel 37:14)

Isaiah 44:3 *"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring."*

Joel 2:28 *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh"*

**THE VALIDITY OF
THE BAPTISM IN
THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Jesus as our example was water baptized and baptized in the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit may be seen in His life as He walked this earth. He was born of the Spirit (Matthew 1:20), filled with the Spirit (Luke 3:22, 4:1), led of the Spirit (Luke 4:1), anointed to preach by the Spirit (Luke 4:18), able to cast out demons by the Spirit (Luke 11:20), offered up on Calvary by the Spirit (Hebrews 9:14) and raised from the dead by the Spirit (Romans 8:11). As a perfect man in his humanity, He was totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit who was bestowed upon Him without measure (John 3:34). How much more should we the church be dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit?

John the Baptist spoke of the baptism which Jesus was to effect in the lives of His followers (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:6-8, Luke 3:16, John 1:32-33). Jesus Himself spoke of the coming "... *Promise of My Father*" and Peter testified of this fulfillment on the day of Pentecost.

Luke 24:49 *"Behold, I send the **Promise of My Father** upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*

Acts 1:4 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the **Promise of the Father**, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me..."*

Acts 2:38-39 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. For **the promise** is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

We can readily see that this promise is for us today. Peter spoke these words almost 2,000 years ago – so we are indeed "afar off" – and God is still calling.

A final example of the validity of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is drawn from the Tabernacle of Moses. The only entrance to the tabernacle was the gate representing Jesus-the Way (John 14:6). Upon entering, one faced the brazen altar of the blood sacrifices, representative of regeneration through the blood of Jesus. The next furnishing was the laver of water for washing, representative of water baptism. Only at this point (Exodus 40:12-15) was the priest anointed with oil (symbol of Holy Spirit) and consecrated to receive the priestly garment that he might minister to God.

He received the three-fold witness of the blood, water and Spirit (1 John 5:7-8) and was prepared to enter the door (John 3:5) of the Holy Place.

Those who remained outside the Holy Place could not see the glory of the Lord in the Tabernacle. Our entrance to this glory requires the blood sacrifice of Jesus, water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Only then will priestly ministry to the Lord in the Holy Place be possible. Only then can we enter into the Holy of Holies where we come to know Jesus as our Life (John 14:6).

Some believers question if the phrase, "baptism in the Holy Spirit," is scriptural. It will clarify the issue to understand that all the following phrases mean the same thing:

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part One)

Baptized with the Holy Spirit	Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5, 11:16
Filled with the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:5; 9:17; Ephesians 5:18
Holy Spirit fell on them	Acts 8:16, 10:44, 11:15
The Holy Spirit given	Acts 2:38, 8:18, 1:16-17, 5:32; Luke 11:13
Poured out upon them	Acts 10:45
Endued with power	Luke 24:47-49
Promise of the Father	Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 2:39; John 15:26
Gift of the Holy Spirit (God)	Acts 8:20; Acts 10:45, 11:17; Hebrews 6:4.

Acts 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the beginning of the supernatural lifestyle of the believer. Without it the power to witness is lacking and there is no supernatural demonstration of who Jesus is and what Jesus does. Peter and John were proclaiming Jesus in the temple when arrested by the temple guard (Acts 4:3). Brought before the Council, they witnessed of the power of Jesus to heal and to save, declaring that salvation existed in no other name. After being released with a warning, they joined their companions to report all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. Lifting their voices in one accord, they prayed for boldness to witness and for signs to follow. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:33 *And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus... .*

The gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) are the works of the Holy Spirit in the life of the body of Christ. The word "gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:1) has been added by the translators, and due to the popularity of the King James version of the Bible, we have maintained the use of the word. However, a better phrase might be "manifestations of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7). We understand that these "gifts" (vs. 4), "ministries" (vs. 5) and "activities" (vs. 6) are manifestations of the Holy Spirit within the body of Christ by which the ministry of the Lord Jesus is continued. In this way the supernatural demonstration of His love and power is manifested through the church. Thus, the baptism in the Holy Spirit prepares believers to be used as instruments of restoration by the Lord. It gives the believer the power to demonstrate a supernatural lifestyle.

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity.

1 John 5:7-8 *For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*

Question 2: What are some of the divine attributes of the Holy Spirit?

- a. The Holy Spirit is eternal.

Hebrews 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

- b. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

Psalms 139:7 *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?*

- c. The Holy Spirit is omniscient (all-knowing).

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

Question 3: How does the Holy Spirit minister in relation to the Church?

- a. The Church, like Jesus, is born of the Spirit.

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

- b. The Church, like Jesus, is to be filled with the Spirit.

Luke 3:22 *And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

- c. The Church, like Jesus, is to be led of the Spirit.

Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.*

- d. The Church, like Jesus, is to be anointed for ministry.

BAPTISM FOUR

Luke 4:18-19 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD."*

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part Two)

HOMEWORK

1. The world rightfully expects a _____ of the _____ from the believer since the _____ validates the _____ Christian life.

2. What is the Trinity? Please explain and give scripture references.

3. According to our lesson, what is the "promise of the Father?"

4. The baptism in the Holy spirit is the _____ of the _____ of the believer.

5. How is the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ continued?

6. What does the presence of the Holy Spirit mean to your Christian walk?

BAPTISM FOUR

In the last lesson we took an in-depth look at the Holy Spirit. We saw that the Holy Spirit is not an "it." He is a Person; in fact, He is God! We also saw through Old Testament types and New Testament teaching that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a valid biblical experience that is absolutely necessary for believers today. This baptism gives us the power to witness for Christ and to live a normal Christian life, a life of supernatural power and ability.

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to them 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 with fire."*

**JESUS – THE
BAPTIZER IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

This verse clearly shows us that Jesus is the one who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. When we are baptized in water, we must totally yield ourselves to the one who baptizes us: Likewise, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit we must totally yield ourselves to Jesus. We must come to Him without any preconceived conditions about what we will or will not accept, nor with any preconceived ideas about what our response should be. We need to seek **more of Jesus** as the **Giver** in our lives and **not just the gifts**.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, "... *He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'*" (John 20:22). However, when He ascended, He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-8), which they received on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

**RECEIVING THE
BAPTISM IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

This shows us that receiving the Holy Spirit at conversion and being filled with the Holy Spirit are not the same. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again (Romans 8:9). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience.

Since the Holy Spirit is a person, we cannot receive Him in doses. You cannot receive part of a person; you either receive him or reject him. For example, when you receive a person into your home, you receive the whole person. You cannot tell him to leave part of himself outside. However, you can restrict the amount of access you give him inside your home. Likewise, when we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive all of Him, not part of Him, "... *for God does not give the spirit by measure*" (John 3:34). Even though the Holy Spirit abides in us, we can restrict His access to all parts of our lives.

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we do not receive more of the Holy Spirit. Rather, He receives more of us. He already dwells in us, but in this moment He comes upon us in power and takes total control of our lives. To illustrate, when we are baptized in water, we do not receive the water, it receives us. We do not try to stay under for a long time and drink in all the water that we can. All we do is totally yield ourselves to the baptizer who immerses us in the water. In the same way, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we totally yield ourselves to the Baptizer and He immerses us in the Spirit of God.

We cannot earn the gifts of God; we simply receive them (Ephesians 2:8, Luke 11:13). As we are saved by faith, we also receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part Two)

We cannot earn the gifts of God; we simply receive them (Ephesians 2:8, Luke 11:13). As we are saved by faith, we also receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit by faith. The single most important ingredient to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a simple, child-like faith (Galatians 3:2), which means that there can be no doubts in our mind. We must come to the absolute conclusion that this baptism is a biblical, necessary experience after salvation which is beneficial and applicable for today.

God's plan is for us to receive the "kingdom package" quickly (Baptisms One, page 3), not to extend the work out over many years. In the book of Acts the believers came to this point soon after their new birth and water baptism. Their heart was tender and yearning for the Lord. We find that when a person has difficulty receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, they may need a season of repentance, particularly from any occult vows or practices. The lordship of Jesus needs to be firmly established before we can totally yield to Him as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

Before we are filled with the Spirit, a deep-seated hunger and thirst for the Lord Jesus Christ and a recognition of our need for more of Him will be sensed.

Matthew 5:6 *"Blessed are those who **hunger** and **thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be **filled**."*

John 7:37-39 ... *"If anyone **thirsts**, let him **come** to Me and **drink**. He who **believes** in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 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.*

We might summarize what Jesus said as follows:

1. **Thirst** – Honestly admit there is a "dryness" that has not been quenched, and only God can meet this need.
2. **Come** – to Jesus the Baptizer.
3. **Drink** – Open your spirit to Him and allow Him to baptize your spirit in the Holy Spirit, filling you to overflowing with His love.
4. **Believe** – You must accept by faith that which Jesus has promised to give you. You receive nothing from God without faith.
5. **Flow** – This is an active response to receiving. It is your faith in action, allowing the Holy Spirit to flow through you from your innermost being.

EVIDENCES OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

We know that Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit to give us power to witness and to manifest the supernatural Christian life. In the book of Acts, there was a supernatural manifestation every time someone was baptized in the Holy Spirit. The usual manifestation was speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). Sometimes the manifestation was prophecy (Acts 19:6), but it was always supernatural! In other words, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself by giving believers the power to do something that they could not do in their natural ability.

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part Two)

Some people ask, "Do I have to speak in tongues?" The answer is, "No, you don't have to speak in tongues; you get to!" The Bible does not specifically state that if you do not speak in tongues you have not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, the Scriptures do indicate (and experience agrees) that a supernatural manifestation is always released when someone is baptized in the Holy Spirit, whether it be prophecy and/or speaking in tongues.

Speaking in tongues is looked down upon in many circles, but it is a scriptural evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and it plays an important role in the Spirit-filled life. Those who use this gift in their daily prayer life (Jude 20) testify that they are better prepared to combat the things that frequently beset them in their Christian walk. Speaking in tongues edifies or builds up the believer (1 Corinthians 14:4). So it is not that you **must** speak in tongues, but that you **get** to!

It may be that God chose this peculiar manifestation because the tongue is our body's most unruly member which "... *no man can tame...*" (James 3:8). When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. This is evidenced by our tongues being under the control of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues is one way the heart expresses itself (Matthew 12:34), and may indicate that the Spirit has possession of both the inner man and the outer man. Speaking in tongues is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but it is an initial evidence of it.

There are many ways to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Some people receive on their own; some have hands laid on them. Some receive immediately; some tarry for a while. Some begin to pray in the spirit; some sing in the spirit. This shows us that God is not limited to a single method or formula. He is sovereign and will do exactly what is needed in each individual situation. However, there are some basic truths we need to know.

HOW TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

First of all, you must be saved and have the Spirit of God dwelling within you before you can be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 ...*"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Secondly, the believer must repent of any known sin and yield himself totally to the lordship of Christ.

Acts 5:32 *"And we are witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

Thirdly, you must ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit. We do not receive what we do not ask for (James 4:2).

John 16:24 *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*

Fourthly, you must receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit by faith (John 7:38; Hebrews 11:6).

Luke 11:9-13 *"And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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!"*

When we ask God for the Holy Spirit, we do not need to be afraid of what we will receive. He will not allow us to receive an evil spirit. We can trust our heavenly Father to give us only good and perfect gifts (James 1:17). Therefore, we must totally yield control to Jesus and allow Him to baptize us in the Holy Spirit. We can begin to praise and worship Him and believe Him to work for us and in us.

Fifthly, **you** speak in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4). Nowhere does the Bible say that the Holy Spirit speaks in tongues. In every instance in the early Church, the individual spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6), not the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Spirit that allows us to speak in tongues, but we must open our mouths in faith and believe Him to fill it. The Holy Spirit will provide the words, but the believer must furnish the sound, the lips, the tongue and the effort to speak.

1 Corinthians 14 gives instruction concerning speaking in tongues. In context, it says that our spirits are subject to us. This means that God does not force us to speak in tongues nor operate in the gifts of the Spirit. He will not operate our vocal organs against our will. We are never "out of control." We simply choose to yield to the control of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is absolutely scriptural and absolutely necessary. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for today and it is for you. It is a precious gift from God that gives us the power to live the supernatural Christian life. God has already poured out His Spirit; all that remains is for us to receive this baptism by faith.

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is total immersion in the Spirit of God.

Acts 1:4-5 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which, " He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

Question 2: Who baptizes in the Holy Spirit?

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to them 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 with fire."*

Question 3: What are some of the evidences of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- a. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by power to witness.

Acts 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

- b. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

- c. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by prophecy.

Acts 19:6 *And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*

INTRODUCTION

Thus far in our series on the doctrine of baptisms we have studied baptism into the body of Christ, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These three baptisms (which we call "the three-fold witness" or "the kingdom package") are absolute necessities for us to enter and walk victoriously in God's kingdom (John 3:3-5). They are not optional!

We must understand that while these three baptisms are all "one-time" experiences, we must continue to walk in the reality of them daily. When God does a work **in** us, He always requires it to be worked **out** in our lives. After we are born again and baptized into the body, we must work out that salvation into our daily lives (Philippians 2:12-13). After we are baptized in water, we must continue to live a separated life (1 Corinthians 10:1-14). Likewise, after we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, we must continually walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). We cannot live on past experience; what matters is our walk with God right now!

According to Hebrews 5:12-6:2, we must be grounded in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ in order to move from milk to meat, from infancy to maturity. We must *"...not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is"* (Ephesians 5:17). What is God's will for us? Until we know God's will, we remain spiritually immature, carried about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

UNTO FULL STATURE

Many are full of questions, such as: "Why am I here? Why am I going through this? God, what are You doing to me?" However, questioning God comes to an end when we begin to know Him, His character and His desires for His children. We all need a revelation of the father heart of God. God is a loving Father who wants to do us good, not harm. Sure, He disciplines us as every loving father does (Hebrews 12:5-11), but He is not a cosmic killjoy waiting for us to mess up so He can zap us. He loves us, cares for us and wants only the best for us.

We need to realize that God does nothing without a purpose. He has a purpose for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1) and this "everything" includes us. The first chapter of Ephesians reveals three things that are in God's will. First, God desires children (vs. 4-5). Secondly, He desires not just any kind of children; He wants His children to be holy (vs. 4). Thirdly, God wants His holy children to glorify Him in all things (vs. 12). God was so pleased with His Son that He wanted a vast family of sons conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). We are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus so that He can be the firstborn among many brethren.

Our Father wants us, to come *"...to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13). As God was glorified in everything Jesus did, so He wants to be glorified in all that we do. To bring God glory, we must be changed into the image of Jesus Christ. Fortunately, God never requires anything without making provision for us to be able to meet that requirement. He has given us the "kingdom package," the Word, the Church, the Holy Spirit and also an ongoing refining process which we call the baptism in fire.

THE BAPTISM IN FIRE

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to them 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 with fire."*

God will do whatever is necessary to make us like Jesus Christ. The thing that interests Him most is how much we resemble Jesus. We cannot become like Christ by self-effort. In fact, the very thing that hinders us from being like Him is **self**. As John the Baptist said, *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30). The baptism in fire is the process whereby God deals with our self-will so that it is laid aside and rendered dead. We must be emptied of all selfish desires so He can live through us (Galatians 2:20). Simply put, the baptism in fire is the message of the cross!

The baptism in fire is God working all things out for our good (Romans 8:28). We must understand that in God's view, "our good" is when we fulfill His purpose of becoming like Jesus (Romans 8:29). We must not try to limit God. He uses all things for our good. He has the same purpose for all of us, but He uses different means to accomplish His purpose in each of us. He knows what it takes to drive us out of self-centeredness and into Him. He can use the Word, trials, temptations, persecution, ridicule, times of lack, times of plenty, hardships, sorrow, delayed answer to prayer, etc. He uses whatever is right in each individual situation.

We need to realize that nothing happens to the Christian by chance. Nothing! God is still in control. Psalm 37:23 says, *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."* God is ordering our circumstances, knowing what it will take to make us like Jesus. We must learn to see God's hand moving in our lives. Someone once said, "God fixes a fix to fix us. If we fix the fix, then God has to fix another fix to fix us."

THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN FIRE

The baptism in fire is the process by which God conforms us to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). We have already discussed this fully.

The baptism in fire reveals what is in our hearts.

Jeremiah 17:5-10 *Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."*

Notice in these verses that the heat comes to both the good and the evil. The heat serves to reveal what is in the heart because *"the heart is deceitful above all*

things ... who can know it?" The heat destroys the wicked, but the good survive and yield fruit.

Deuteronomy 8:2 says that God led the children of Israel into the heat of the wilderness to prove what was in their hearts. Certainly an omniscient God knew what was in their hearts, but they did not. God puts the heat on us to reveal what is in our hearts. He uses different "heat" for different people. For example, He put Solomon in the fire by offering to give him anything he wanted (1 Kings 3:5-14). Solomon's heart was pure at the time, therefore he asked nothing for himself, only wisdom to lead God's people.

Peter is an example of man not knowing his own heart. Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times, but Peter did not believe that denial was in his heart (Matthew 26:33-35). However, he denied Jesus three times that very day! Truly the heart is deceitful and we cannot know it except by fire and God's revelation.

We need to know that God tests us for our good. The Greek word for temptation is "peirasmos," which means "to put to a proof." The Greek word for trial is "dokimos," which means "to approve, to prove acceptable." In other words, God tests us to prove us with the intention of approval. An example of this would be a test given to a medical student before he becomes a doctor. The test is given to approve him, not deny him. Another example would be a gold assay. The test is given in the hope that gold is present, not absent. Likewise, God tests us with the intention of approving us.

The baptism in fire purifies us.

God does not reveal our hearts to depress us. He reveals our hearts in order to bring us to repentance. God uses heat and fire to test and purify us. Ancient goldsmiths put crude gold into a crucible and subjected it to intense heat, causing it to become liquid. All the impurities would then rise to the surface and the metalworker would skim them off. Heat was the only way to remove the impurities. When the goldsmith could see his face clearly mirrored in the liquid, he knew it was pure gold.

Likewise, God puts us in the crucible of life and turns up the heat. This causes the impurities to rise so they can be dealt with. Fire reveals our sinful attitudes and actions. As we repent, God cleanses us (1 John 1:9) and purifies us so that He can see Himself clearly mirrored in us. Christlikeness is the goal of the baptism in fire. Since God is making us pure, He burns out all the dross and impurities.

Matthew 3:11-12 *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

Notice in this passage that the chaff was burned, but the wheat was saved. The Lord desires to burn out all the sinful, unnecessary things in our lives in order to save the good.

The baptism in fire produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Hebrews 12:11 *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Fruit is not given; it is grown! Growing fruit requires sun, rain and wind. The rain waters the fruit, but the dry times cause the roots to go down deep. Without the heat of the sun, there would be no growth. Even the wind serves to strengthen the plant. The Holy Spirit is a faithful husbandman who uses all means to grow fruit in our lives.

In a real sense, John 15:2 comes into view here, because no pruning seems pleasurable while it is happening. Pruning is not done to hurt the plant, but to enable the plant to bear more fruit.

The baptism in fire gives us a revelation of God that cannot be received any other way.

When Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace for taking a stand for the Lord, the King said, "*Look!... I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God*" (Daniel 3:25). These three Hebrews had been faithful servants of the Lord, but it was in the fire that they saw Him face-to-face. When we are going through a fiery trial, our prayer should be, "God, open our eyes to see You in the midst of the fire."

The baptism in fire causes us to be a comfort to others.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*

As we walk through the fire, we are enabled to minister to the needs of others. Receiving the comfort of God allows us to freely comfort others (Matthew 10:8).

RESPONDING TO THE BAPTISM IN FIRE

Should our response to the baptism in fire be depression? Self-pity? Rebellion? No! The biblical response is to rejoice!

James 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

We must count it all joy because the fire perfects us and causes the glory of God to rest on us.

1 Peter 4:12-14 *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you... .*

We must not think it is strange for Christians to suffer. Christ suffered and a servant is not above his master. Suffering is a natural result of a Christlike life! The world hated Him then and hates all who are like Him now (John 15:18-19).

If you are going through the fire now – REJOICE! God is working in you and He always finishes what He starts (Philippians 1:6). He is making you like Jesus, so do not fight against what He is doing in you. Embrace the cross. Ask Him, "God, what are You teaching me?" Then be obedient to what He tells you. This time of testing will not go on forever.

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Our response to the baptism in fire must be that of rejoicing, listening and obedience. The baptism in fire is nothing to be feared. When the three Hebrews came out of the fire, not a hair was singed. Their bonds were loosed and there was not even the smell of smoke on them (Daniel 3:27). God delivers completely. We sometimes want deliverance from the fire, but God delivers in the midst of the fire.

Remember God's promise, "... when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you" (Isaiah 43:2). Hallelujah!

RESPONSIVE READING

Question 1: What is the baptism in fire?

The baptism in fire is the ongoing refining process that conforms the Christian to the image of Jesus Christ.

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to them 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 with fire."*

Question 2: What are the purposes of the baptism in fire?

- a. The baptism in fire reveals what is in our hearts.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."*

- b. The baptism in fire purifies us.

Matthew 3:11-12 *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

- c. The baptism in fire produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Hebrews 12:11 *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

- d. The baptism in fire causes us to be a comfort to others.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*

HOMEWORK

1. We need to realize that God does _____ without a _____.
2. What are three things that are in God's will as revealed by Ephesians Chapter One?
3. What is the baptism in fire?
4. What should be our response to the baptism in fire?
5. Suffering is the _____ of a Christlike life.
6. How do you see the purging fire of God at work in your life at this present time?

A Study of the Elementary Principles of Christ

This series, based on Hebrews 6:1-2, is designed to lay a firm foundation in your life. It is necessary to be grounded in these basic principles in order to “go on to maturity.” It is our prayer that God will richly bless you through your study of FIRST PRINCIPLES.

Book One: Vision

The Sure Foundation
The Plan and Purpose of God
Restoration
Vision of the Local Church
Praise and Worship
Local Church Ministry

Book Two: Repentance

The Biblical View of Sin
Repentance
The New Covenant
The Father Heart of God
Forgiveness
The Lifestyle of Repentance

Book Three: Faith

Faith Toward God
The Abiding Faith
Living by Revelation
Developing Faith
The Response of Faith
The Testing of Faith

Book Four: Baptisms

The Doctrine of Baptisms
Baptism in the Body of Christ
Water Baptism
The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - Part I
The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - Part II
The Baptism in Fire

Book Five: Laying on of Hands

Laying on of Hands
Healing
The Gifts of the Spirit
The Motivational Gifts
The Five-Fold Ministry
Presbytery

Book Six: Resurrection Life

Resurrection Life
Body Life
Church Life
Overcoming Life
Family Life
Prayer Life

Book Seven: Eternal Judgement

The Eternal Perspective
The Eternal Kingdom
Eternal Judgement
The Eternal Word
Eternal Worship
Eternal Life