

Ritual cleansing by washing the whole body in pools before sacrifice and worship in the Temple was practised by the Jews. The only reference to washing the whole body in the Bible was when priests were inaugurated into their office (Leviticus 8:6).

Washing of hands (Lev. 15:11; Mark 7:4-5) continued among the Jews from Old Testament times. Perhaps washing of the whole body in Numbers 19:11-12. All of the above is what Hebrews 6:2 refers to.

Baptism – its meaning: The word means to 'dip' or 'immerse' and much water is needed for this (John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39). So baptism means to **totally immerse**. The word was used for the dying of garments, totally immersed in the dye vats. Sprinkling water on babies or older folk is not found in the Bible.

The Baptism of John

John’s was a baptism of repentance and was by emersion: “*John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (Mark 1:4).

John’s message – calling Israel: **a.** back to the Law, **b.** for judgement was impending, **c.** Messiah the LORD was among them: “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God"*” (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3).

John is the bridging prophet - the link between the Old and the New Covenant. “*The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it*” (Luke 16:16).

The Old Covenant was in place until the New Covenant came in by the blood of Christ (Mat. 26:28).

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Jesus’ baptism

John was reluctant to baptise Jesus: *‘But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" Then he allowed Him’* (Matthew 3:15).

A simplest explanation of His words: Jesus was sinless, He needed no repentance, thus no baptism.

But in His humanity, He would **fully identify with the human race and with Israel His people**, to take our sins upon Himself at Calvary, and so by baptism, He had in view His own death, burial and resurrection.

By this identification, He, our sin bearer, would bring **justification** to all who believed on Him. “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1).

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Baptism by identification

This identification is seen in the eyes of God, is set forth in Romans 6:3-8. “*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*” (Rom 6:4).

Water baptism is an outward ordinance, pointing to this deep spiritual truth, as is also clearly set forth in Colossians 2:12 : for we who believe are “*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*”.

This is a liberating experience, and is part of being filled with the Spirit. Understanding this with the Holy Spirits help, we are set free to serve the Lord with rejoicing and in useful service.

When Christ died, we died in Him, and were raised in Him.

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Baptised by or in one Spirit

When we receive the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit enters our heart, and we are ‘*born of the Spirit*’ and the Bible says, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father"*” (Rom 8:14-15). This adoption literally means that we are ‘*placed as sons*’ by a divine work of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible also says, “*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*” (1 Cor 12:13).

It is the Holy Spirit who baptises us into one body. So at the moment of our conversion, the Holy Spirit baptises, or places us into the one body of Christ, and this body is the Church of the living God. We are united by one Spirit and again we read, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling”* (Ephesians 4:4).

We must be careful here, and note, we are not baptised into the Spirit with some ecstatic experience, but the Spirit is the baptiser into the one body, the Church of the living God.

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Believer’s baptism

Commanded by the Lord, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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,** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20).

This was practised by the apostles (Acts 29:41-42). It means to ‘dip’ or ‘immerse’. Garments were ‘baptised’ in dye vats. Sprinkling of water on babes is not found in the Bible.

Philip the evangelist: The only condition: *“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”* (Acts 8:36-37). The Nestle Aland Text omits some of this.

Baptism does not save: *“There is also an **antitype** (Christ is the type) which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 3:21).

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Baptising in the one ‘name’ (Matthew 28:18-20)

The name of of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching us the truth of **the trinity.**

*‘In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth’* (Gen 1:1). The **trinity** is latent in the word ‘**God**’ from the Hebrew ‘**elohim**’, a uni-plural word.

Again: *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in **Our image,** according to **Our likeness”** (Genesis 1:26).*

A great question: *“how much more shall the **blood of Christ,** who through **the eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to **God,** cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* (Heb 9:14)

Jesus said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father”.

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The Great Commission - A summarary

GO - With ALL authority, teaching ALL thing:

*‘And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth... **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... “teaching them to observe **all things** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Amen’ (Mat 28:18-20).

With the promise of His presence (to enable us in mission) till the end of the age - when He returns for His Church.

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The Death and Resurrection of Christ Reading: 1 Cor. 15: 1-8

Three things to note – ‘Christ died for our sins...was buried...He rose again the third day...’

1. Christ died: Some were saying ‘There is no resurrection from the dead’ – but if there is no resurrection, there can be no salvation – for that kind of faith is vain – 1 Cor. 15:12-19 – **see v.2.**

His death was foretold in the Old Testament: Read Psalm 22; Isaiah 53. *“But He was wounded for our transgressions...”*

His resurrection also foretold: Read Psalm 16:8-11; Jesus said, *“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again”* - John 10:17.

Calvary is the meeting place of the ages. It is only by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit that we can in measure understand this, and how all of the **Divine Attributes** met together there: *“Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other”*- Psalm 85:10.

2. Buried and reconciled through His death: *“And they made His grave with the wicked; But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth”* - Isaiah 53:9.

Reconciliation is the act of establishing harmony between God and man through Christ. God does not need to be reconciled, mankind does!

*“For if when we were enemies we were **reconciled** to God through the **death** of His Son, much more, having been **reconciled**, we shall be saved by **His life**”* - Romans 5:6-11.

*“Now all things are of God, who has **reconciled** us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of **reconciliation**, that is, that God was in Christ **reconciling** the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation”* (2 Cor 5:18-19).

3. But saved by His life, the grave could not hold Him, and will not hold us – Job knew this, dating from 2000 BC: *“For I know that **my Redeemer lives**, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, **That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself**, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* – Job 19:23-27.

As Jesus said: *“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also”* - John 14:19.

4. He identified with us in birth, life, death, burial and resurrection:

a. By taking **Humanity** into union with **Divinity**: By His virgin birth – *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* (Emmanuel, God with us) - Isaiah 7:14 - *“that is, that **God was in Christ** reconciling the world to Himself”* - 2 Corinthians 5:19. See also Phil. 2:5-10.

b. By **Baptism**: Rom. 6:4: believers are *“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**”* - Colossians 2:12; 3:1-4.

Baptism: When Christ died we died in Him - emersion; when Christ was buried we were buried with Him – submersion; when Christ arose we arose with Him - emergence!

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In Conclusion:

His Resurrection life seals our Salvation: *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, **the gospel of your salvation**; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory”* - Eph. 1:13-14.

*“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* - Romans 10:10.

Jesus said: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life”* - John 5:24-30.

The Gospel that the apostles and Paul proclaimed means ‘Good News’

“Christ died for our sins...was buried...rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8