

## Receiving His Power “...instruction about baptisms...”

*“So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. ... You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6:1-3 NLT*

Jesus offers spiritual-baptisms to imbue His power to genuine believers. Please notice that baptism is plural in our text, meaning more than one. We know from Scripture that water baptism gives us *His power* to live above sin. Scripture also tells us much about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which gives us *His power* to love people in a genuine way. Also, notice an important takeaway from our text: both of these baptisms are elementary, meaning they are essential, “*basic teachings*” for the new believer and not some scriptural doctrine you eventually receive as a mature believer.

Let’s dive into this essential topic by looking first at Old Testament circumcision, a type and shadow of water baptism. Bodily circumcision was a “*physical procedure*,” which was an outward sign that a Hebrew male was included in the Abrahamic covenant. As with many spiritual ordinances given in the Old Testament, bodily circumcision gives insight into how believers are included in the New Covenant through water baptism.

Similar to Old Testament circumcision, the ritual of water baptism is accomplished in the natural realm, but the result manifests as “*a spiritual circumcision*.” When a believer submits to God’s Word concerning water baptism, he or she is, in fact, asking God to do a supernatural work in his or her heart. This spiritual, supernatural work is a “*cutting away of your sinful nature*,” using a divine scalpel. Water baptism produces a sanctifying work (your old life and your new life are separated) because “*you were raised to new life by trusting in the mighty power of God*.” The result is an outward sign of heart transformation accomplished by God in the new believer. God wants to change us from the inside out. Colossians 2:11-14 explains,

*“When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.” Colossians 2:11-14 NLT*

But God has another baptism for us—remember our Hebrews 6:3 text says baptisms (plural). Jesus also offers every believer a spiritual baptism with fire. Luke 3:16 says, “*Jesus, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*.” *NKJV*. Why does Jesus offer these important gifts of baptism? He knows that we need them. Water baptism is accomplished in the *physical realm*, yet produces a *spiritual outcome*, whereas the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a *spiritual procedure* that manifests life-giving power in the *physical realm*.

Let’s look closely at the Holy Spirit baptism. All four Gospels record that Jesus was baptized in the Holy Spirit moments after He was water-baptized. The baptism in the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus to powerfully project outward, taking God’s infinite love *horizontally* to people who needed His goodness and mercy. Why is this so important to God? Acts 10:38 says it this way, “*And you*

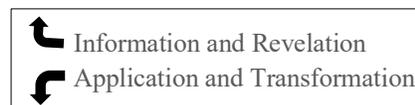
*know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*” *NLT*

Jesus needed Holy Spirit baptism, which imbued Him with supernatural power. Why? Because He was establishing a mighty kingdom and introducing saving grace to a people who would reject and scorn Him. He would also confront the demonic realm. These are the same reasons we need the Holy Spirit’s empowerment today. The baptism in the Holy Spirit gives the surrendered believer super-natural ability to powerfully engage his or her *horizontal relationships* with the Father’s love and His saving grace. A believer who receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit is powerfully enabled to live righteously and outwardly just as Jesus did.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit will work God’s grace into your life, and you will exhibit His spiritual gifts, also known as the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Because of your enhanced ability to love people with His love, your sphere of influence will be blessed. In other words, the people you know and meet will feel enriched because the Holy Spirit’s power enables you to “live out” His *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, as well as generosity.*

**In summary:** Water baptism is accomplished in the *physical realm*, yet produces a *spiritual outcome*, whereas the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a *spiritual procedure* that manifests life-giving power in the *physical realm*. God wants us to experience both baptisms so we can fully engage our world with His power. Water baptism cuts away the sinful nature of our heart, empowering it to rise above sin so we can live righteously. God wants to change us from the inside out. This means we can be a credible witness because our testimony rings true.

Receiving God’s gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers us to engage our world with the Gospel Message in a genuine way, just like Jesus did. The baptism in the Holy Spirit enables you to love others at a much higher level, bringing His abundant life to your relationships. When this happens, the people we know and meet can experience firsthand that God is existent, tangible, and relatable. —Ω



*Heavenly Father, thank You for looking ahead in time and providing every essential thing that I would need to live righteously and outwardly for Your glory. Thank You for Your power to genuinely love the people I know and meet. Thank You for revealing Your Word that leads me and guides me into Your everlasting truth. Thank You for including me in the New Covenant by the new birth given in Jesus. LORD, thank You for spiritual circumcision that has cut away my sinful nature. Thank You for raising me to new life because I trusted in Your mighty power. Thank You for transforming my heart to glorify You all the days of my life.*

*LORD, I surrender everything to You and submit to Your desire that I receive Your baptism in the Holy Spirit with fire. I receive Your gift of Holy Spirit baptism so that I can boldly take Your infinite love horizontally to people who need Your goodness and mercy, just as Jesus did. Thank You for working Your grace into my life so that I can exhibit Your love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, as well as generosity. I yield my life to You and praise Your name above all names as I ask these petitions in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.*