

The Basic Doctrines of Christianity

Baptism

Why is baptism a doctrine of Christianity?

What does baptism symbolise?

Hebrews 6:2 [NIV] *“Instruction about baptisms ...”*

Note the scripture says “baptisms” indicating more than one.

The Greek word translated “baptisms” is “baptismōs” from the root word “baptizō” – **meaning to dip or immerse into a liquid, mostly water.**

John 3:23 [NIV] *“Now John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptised.”*

John the Baptist chose a location for baptising those who came to him where there was plenty of water for total immersion.

John’s message was for people to turn from their sins, repent and start a new life.

John’s baptism was an outward sign of this change of direction.

John the Baptist constantly directed people toward One whose coming he was announcing, Who would also baptise them.

Matthew 3:11 [NIV] *“I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”*

To be effective the outward sign of baptism has to be accompanied with an inner change.

That can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit working with us and eventually, if we let Him, in us and through us to others.

Matthew 3:13-17 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

Jesus did not have any sins to repent of but His baptism pointed towards the need of the Holy Spirit to work in and through us to empower us to make the needed changes in our life.

Hebrews 9:14 [NIV] *“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”*

Jesus the physical Son of Man, accomplished all He did by the Eternal Holy Spirit working in Him.

John 1:29-34 [NIV] *“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”*

This is how Jesus was first revealed to be the Saviour of humanity and the Son of God.

Note:- The dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, remained with Jesus Christ the Son of Man, God in the flesh.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;”*

The power of the Holy Spirit was **never** quenched in Jesus the Son of Man.

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Jesus **never** did anything to cause the Holy Spirit to be grieved and leave Him, during His life right up to His death on the cross.

Matthew 27:46 [NIV] *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”, which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

This is the only time that the Holy Spirit left Jesus the Son of Man.

The Holy Spirit was grieved because all the sins of humanity were at that moment being placed on Jesus.

So that His death could atone for all our sins and we would be freed from the justified death that our sins bring on us.

Romans 8:11 [NIV] *“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”*

The Holy Spirit returned to Jesus, the Son of Man, after three days when He resurrected Him back to life.

We are to follow Jesus Christ’s example of baptism and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-11 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”***

Just what are we being told in this exciting passage of scripture?

Baptism is likened to our death and being placed in a grave.

Why?

So that we can by a resurrection begin to live a new life devoted to Jesus Christ.

This is what is meant by being “born again”.

This being “born again” means that physical death is no longer something we are to fear.

Hebrews 2:14-15 [NIV] *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**”*

Accepting Jesus Christ’s death as a substitute for our own deserved death, frees us from the fear of death that is a powerful tool in the hands of Satan.

1 John 4:4 [NIV] *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them [those held in the power of the antichrist, that is Satan], because the One who is in you [the Holy Spirit] is greater than the one who is in the world [Satan].”*

As long as the Holy Spirit remains in us Satan cannot overcome us with his power over death.

Romans 8:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, there is **now no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*

“Therefore”, as a result of what we have just read in chapter six of Romans.

All the guilt of our sins have been washed away, and we are free to live a new life in Jesus Christ.

What does this “in Christ Jesus” mean?

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, **the Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for **he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**”*

Just as the Holy Spirit that was constantly in Jesus the physical Son of Man and gave Him all the power He needed to live a perfect life.

So the Holy Spirit in us allows Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Heavenly High Priest to live His life again in us and through us.

John 16:12-15 [NIV] *“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the **Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. **That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.**”*

Jesus will continue to teach us, His disciples, through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

As we have just seen there is mentioned in scripture other baptisms, one of water, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism of fire.

Acts 2:1-4 [NIV] *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire** that separated and came to rest on each of them. **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

This coming of the Holy Spirit was likened to tongues of fire as it enabled the disciples to fulfil the work Christ had left them to do.

This was an internal baptism compared to the external visible baptism of water.

This is the positive baptism of fire.

Perhaps when studying the baptism of fire we should also consider a very negative baptism that all who refuse to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour will eventually suffer.

Revelation 20:15 [NIV] *“If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

This is a baptism of fire that all who do **not** have their name listed in the **book of life** will suffer.

Who are these people?

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”*

All who have died without knowing Jesus Christ as their Saviour will be resurrected to physical life again.

The fact they were standing before the throne of Jesus Christ tells of this resurrection.

The books – Greek *“biblōs”* – referring to the scrolls or books of the Christian Bible, were opened to those people for the first time.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 [NIV] *“And even if our gospel is veiled [Greek – “kaluptō” – covered up], it is veiled to those who are perishing [Greek – “apōllumi” – spiritual destitution or alienation from God]. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ Who is the image [Greek – “ēikōn” – likeness, representation, stutus] of God.”*

This is **not** talking about a group of people who will never have the chance to know the gospel [good news] that Jesus Christ the Son of God brought from God the Father.

I like to look on this as *“family planning”* by God the Father.

God could give all humanity the chance to get to know Him and have a loving relationship with Him, He is not without such power.

But God in His great love, wisdom and patience has decided to work through frail human beings.

God is only calling certain people at various times so they can be prepared to teach others, with the powerful tool of personal experience.

Those called in each era will be well qualified to instruct the people resurrected in the time of the “great white throne”, who lived in their era.

An example of the perfect wisdom of our Creator God.

God is using Satan to help Him accomplish His plan for all humanity.

The very plan that Satan in his evil mind hates more than anything else.

God used Satan to murder Jesus Christ the Son of Man, which has had the very opposite result to what Satan desired.

God used Satan's human instrument in pharaoh of Egypt to reveal His power and glory as He freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt by a baptism in the Red Sea.

This event was the physical type of our being released from the penalty of sin by the firstborn of God the human Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

All such events shows us Who is in charge of all that happens to humanity; God is.

Even all the pain, hatred, violence in society down through the ages has been allowed by God in His great love for humanity.

Only through such personal experience could humanity realise what it is like without the love of God in their lives.

God will never force anyone to accept Him as their Saviour and Lord.

God allows us to "*get to the end of our rope*", to get to a position where we are without hope, so that we call out to Him to become the Saviour of our life.

The sooner we do this the shorter will be the period of pain we have to experience.

Don't delay in being baptised, for our old life to be brought to an end and then being "*born again*" as a child of God.

Born again to seek and serve God and please Him, as any child should their physical parents for all they sacrificed for us to have the physical life we enjoy.