

CHURCH.

LESSON 13

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about church building to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> 2 CORINTHIANS 11 - 13
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Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (2 Corinthians 11 - 13).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <i>[PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE]</i> (1) 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14
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The sixth series (F) of memory verses is about "Preparation for Christian marriage". The titles of the five memory verses are:

- (1) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- (2) Same life goals. Amos 3:3
- (3) Self-control. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
- (4) Proper timing. Ecclesiastes 8:5b-6a
- (5) Right priorities. Matthew 6:33

Meditate, memorise and review two by two.

- (1) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

4	TEACHING (85 minutes) <i>[CHURCH SACRAMENT]</i> CHRISTIAN BAPTISM
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* = These Scripture passages should be read.

Introduce. The doctrine of Christian baptism is a controversial matter in the Christian Church. This study helps different Christian congregations understand what THE BIBLE teaches about baptism and so enable them to take a close look at their own teaching. In final analysis, a Christian congregation and its leaders must choose on which aspect of Christian baptism they put their emphasis. In this study we will learn especially what the Bible teaches about the meaning of Christian baptism. In supplement 1 we will learn especially what the Bible teaches and relates about the practice of Christian baptism.

The words "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5) refers to the fact and meaning of baptism and not the method of baptism. The meaning of Christian baptism is clearly taught in the New Testament. However, a specific time or specific method of baptism is nowhere explicitly taught, prescribed or forbidden in the Bible.

A. THERE EXISTED FIVE DIFFERENT FORMS OF BAPTISM DURING THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.

In the Bible and early Christian literature the word "to baptise" (Greek: baptizó) was only used in a ritual sense.¹

- of the Jewish ritual ablutions (Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38)
- of the baptism of John the Baptist (Mark 1:8-9)
- of Christian baptism (as the sacrament of initiation)(Acts 2:41; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17)
- and typological of the baptism with the Spirit (Mark 1:8)
- and of being overwhelmed by suffering (Mark 10:38) or by the passage through the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:2).

¹ Not in a literal sense! A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, 1957

1. Jewish proselytes baptised themselves with water (cf. John 3:22-26; Hebrews 6:2).

In the period between the Old Testament (the exile to Babylon) and the New Testament (the first coming of Christ) many non-Jews (Gentiles) were attracted to the monotheism of Judaism (cf. Isaiah 44:6). The non-Jews who came to believe in the God of the Bible were called “strangers, foreigners” and “proselytes” (Acts 2:11). The Greek word means that they had “come over”² from heathenism to Judaism.

But Christian baptism does not signify “coming over” to another religion!

(1) The method of becoming a proselyte in the strict Jewish (rabbinical) manner in the period after the exile.

- The motives of the convert to Judaism were scrutinized and he received instruction from three learned men.
- He was physically circumcised as *a sign* that he committed himself to keep the law (John 7:22-23; Galatians 5:3) and that he broke with his old lifestyle.
- He received a new name.
- *He baptised himself with water by taking a bath (by pouring water on and over himself with a mug).*
- The three learned men functioned as witnesses of his baptism and read the Scriptures aloud while he *bathed*.
- The baptised proselyte offered a sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem.
- The number of these proselytes always remained very small (cf. Matthew 23:15).

(2) The method of becoming a proselyte in the Greek (Hellenistic) manner in the period after the exile.

- These proselytes were attracted to the monotheism of Judaism and sought to join Judaism.
- They also *baptised themselves with water by taking a bath*.
- They listened to the recital of the Scriptures and the preaching in synagogues.
- They more or less kept the Jewish ritual or ceremonial laws. But there was especially resistance against physical circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath and the prohibition to eat pork.
- They were called “proselytes” (Greek: *proselutoi*) (Acts 2:11; 6:5; 13:43) or “worshippers of God” or “devout converts” (Greek: *sebomenoi*) (Acts 13:43; 16:14; 18:7). There were many such people. Later many of them became Christians (Acts 13:43).

2. John the Baptist baptised with water (Mark 1:8a; Acts 13:24; 19:2-4).

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ (the Messiah). He prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ who is called “THE LORD”³ (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1-2; Matthew 17:10-14; John 3:28). The baptism of John the Baptist formed a bridge between the Old Testament baptism rituals with water (the purification rites) and the baptism of proselytes (Gentiles who became Jews) with water between the Old and New Testament on the one hand and the New Testament baptism of Christians with water on the other hand.

(1) The expectation of the great cleansing.

From the time of the exile (the time of the prophet Ezekiel) the Jews expected the great cleansing of their people, which would be followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-28; 37:23). According to the Pharisees, only the Messiah or his special ambassador: the Prophet (like Moses) (Deuteronomy 18:18-19) or the prophet Elijah (Malachi 4:5-6) would be allowed to perform this great cleansing, that is, only he would be allowed to baptise (John 1:19-21).

(2) The baptism of John the Baptist with water was *a preparatory event*.

God sent John to baptise with water to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ would baptise people with the Spirit.

“The baptism of John” (Acts 19:3) the Baptist was connected to *the proselyte baptism* of the Jews. He had to call the people to repentance of their sins, because the promised Messiah was coming (Luke 3:3-14). Those who repented he had to baptise with water as a sign or symbol of their repentance (Acts 13:24) and the forgiveness of their sins (Mark 1:4). The baptism of John means that they were brought in an essential relationship to John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Jews to come into an essential relationship to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, by receiving Jesus Christ and by believing in Him (Acts 19:5). That is why it was also called “a baptism of repentance” (Acts 13:24; 19:4). Finally John had to announce that the coming Messiah would baptise them with the Spirit (Mark 1:8; John 1:33)!

The baptism of John was also connected to *the ceremonial purification rites* (John 3:25-26) or “baptism rituals” (Greek: *baptismoi*) (Hebrews 6:2) in the Old Testament. The believers during the Old Testament period of preparation received “the shadow” (cf. Hebrews 10:1), the ritual or ceremonial sign consisting of *the outward sprinkling or washing with water*. This sign in the Old Testament pointed to “the reality” in the New Testament that consisted of *an inner cleansing and forgiveness of sins* which they would receive when they believed in Jesus Christ, (when they are baptised with the Spirit).

² Greek: *proserchomai, proselélutha, prosélutos*

³ LORD is the Name of God (Exodus 3:14-15)

The first disciples of Jesus, for example John and Andrew (John 1:35-41), had been baptised by John the Baptist with water. Later when they began to follow Jesus Christ they were not baptised with water again, because Christian baptism with water symbolised the same as the baptism of John (Mark 1:4), namely, *the washing away of their sins* (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Later, however, they were baptised with the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4)!

(3) The baptism with water of Jesus by John the Baptist was a unique event with a special significance.

Jesus exhorted John the Baptist to baptise him with water (Matthew 3:14-15) “in order to fulfil all righteousness”, that is, to fulfil God’s righteous requirement. Jesus was baptised with water, not because he was a sinner and needed forgiveness of sins, but because he would be baptised with the baptism consisting of the suffering on the cross (Mark 10:38). Christ had come to carry away in his body all the sins of those who would believe in him (Isaiah 53:5-6; John 1:29; 10:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Revelation 5:9). Only in this way could and would he fulfil the righteous requirement of the holy and righteous God, namely, that all evil and sin had to be punished (to be the sacrifice of atonement). In this way Jesus not only confirmed the ministry of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus (cf. Isaiah 40:3), but also confirmed his own ministry: he came to die for the sins of his people (cf. Matthew 1:21).

3. Jesus Christ baptises with the Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11-12).

The phrase “to baptise with the Spirit” occurs only seven times in the New Testament: four times as an active verb with Jesus as the Baptiser and three times as a passive verb with the believers as those being baptised; six times with the preposition “en” as indication of *the means or instrument* (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13) and once in the third case (dative, as indication of *the means or instrument*) (Mark 1:8). Thus, in all seven cases we must translate the words with: “baptising with the Holy Spirit”⁴.

This means that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is baptised with the Holy Spirit (that is, he is born again, saved), but whoever remains an unbeliever will “be baptised with fire” (Matthew 3:11-12) (that is, he remains doomed) (Romans 8:1-2; cf. John 3:18,36; 5:24-29). A third possibility between faith and unbelief does not exist!

Although the baptism with the Spirit was already promised in the Old Testament in connection with the great cleansing (Ezekiel 36:25-28), it is not connected to the baptism of John the Baptist (cf. Acts 19:3-5), but is connected to the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ. The baptism of John the Baptist was only a baptism with visible water. But Christian baptism is in reality a baptism with the invisible Spirit (Mark 1:8). In Christian baptism the visible baptism with water is the sign and seal of the invisible baptism with the Spirit (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 10:47-48; John 3:5)!

Although the baptism with the Spirit with its meaning “the washing away of sins or the forgiveness of sins” is related to the baptism of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4), the baptism with the Spirit only received its full significance with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4) and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), which is the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9-10) – events in salvation history that take place after John the Baptist. Throughout the whole New Testament period the Holy Spirit applies the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ in the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Peter 1:2).

Christian baptism with the Spirit signals the end of the old life and the beginning of the new life. It is the rebirth or regeneration and the beginning of renewal of the believer. The visible Christian baptism with water symbolises the invisible baptism with the Spirit – thus the fact that someone has genuinely become a believer⁵ (Acts 10:47-48).

4. Jesus and his followers are baptised in suffering (Mark 10:38-39).

Christians will be baptised with the same “baptism of suffering” with which Jesus Christ was baptised. Notice *the present continuous tense*: suffering overwhelms Christians again and again. While Christians are only once baptised with water, they are time and again overwhelmed by oppression and persecution in the world. By his suffering on the cross Jesus Christ completed his work of salvation: the sins of believers are perfectly atoned for. “It is finished!” (John 19:30).

But Jesus Christ is still suffering together with Christians throughout history on earth when they are oppressed and persecuted. Christians “fill up in their bodies what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions” (Luke 9:23; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Colossians 1:24, 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:13). This suffering of Christians does not contribute to the atonement of their sins and will only end at Christ’s second coming.

5. Christians baptise with water (Matthew 28:19).

(1) Christian baptism with water is *a command*.

Jesus Christ instituted the baptism with water after his death and resurrection and connected this to the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Christians must baptise new Christians (believers) with water and new Christians must allow themselves to be baptised with water. It is a command and therefore no option for Christians.

⁴ A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, 1957

⁵ Nominal Christians are not born-again (they have not been baptised with the Spirit)

(2) Christian baptism with water is *a decisive event*.

Christian baptism with water is connected to the baptism with the Spirit in the New Testament and with circumcision in the Old Testament.

On the one hand Christian baptism with water is connected to the baptism with the Spirit in the New Testament (John 3:5; Acts 2:38b-39; Acts 10:47-48). Christian baptism with water symbolises much more than the baptism of John the Baptist. It *symbolises* not only repentance and the washing away of all sins, but also the baptism with the Spirit, that is, being united to Jesus Christ, sharing in his completed work of salvation, rebirth and membership of his Body (the Church), his Kingdom and his covenant people.

On the other hand Christian baptism with water is connected to physical circumcision in the Old Testament (Colossians 2:11-13). Christian baptism with water (Acts 2:38a) is just like physical circumcision (Romans 4:11-12) *a sign and seal of the righteousness that comes through faith*. While physical circumcision was only a *temporary* sign and seal of the old covenant period (Genesis 17:9-14; Galatians 5:2-4; 6:12-15), the baptism with water is the *permanent* sign and seal of the new covenant period (Matthew 28:19; cf. Galatians 3:26-29).

(3) Christian baptism with water is *a sign and a seal* (cf. Romans 4:10-11).

Christian baptism signifies (it is a sign) and certifies (assures) (it is a seal) the following:

- that the believer has been baptised with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8), that is, he has been born again
- that all the sins of the believer have been washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16), that is, he has been forgiven and is justified in God's eyes
- that the believer has been united to Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27) and shares in his completed work of salvation (Romans 6:1-7)
- and that the believer has once for all been brought out of the dominion of darkness (Satan) into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13), incorporated into the Body of Christ (the Church) (1 Corinthians 12:13) and has become an heir of God's covenant people (Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 2:9).

B. THE BAPTISM WITH THE SPIRIT

There is but *one baptism* (Ephesians 4:5)!

1. Christian baptism is in reality being baptised with the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is the Head, Bishop (Overseer) and Shepherd (Pastor) of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4). Only Jesus Christ baptises with the Spirit (*Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16-17). The disciples of Jesus Christ only baptise with water (Matthew 28:19).

When we study the word "baptise" (Greek: baptizō) in the Bible, we need to make a very clear distinction (not separation) between being baptised with the Spirit (what God does) and being baptised with water (what Christians do)!

2. Being baptised with the Spirit in biblical teaching.

When are people baptised with the Spirit?

The Bible teaches what the sovereign work of God is and what the responsible work of man is;

(1) The sovereign work of God.

Before the creation of time God had purposed to give grace to believers in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:9-11). *Within time* at his first coming he poured out the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; John 14:17-18). *Within time throughout history* he calls people through the proclamation of the gospel to himself. And *within time throughout history* he saves people through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through their belief in the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). Therefore the followers of Christ must proclaim the gospel in the whole world (Mark 16:15).

(2) The responsibility of man.

A person must hear the gospel, understand it, accept it (repent and believe), hold on to it and bear fruit with perseverance (Luke 8:4-15). *Within time when a person hears the gospel*, he begins to believe (Romans 10:17; cf. Acts 2:36-37). To believe is the responsibility of man (Mark 1:14-15; John 1:11-13; Acts 3:18). Nevertheless, genuine faith is *always a gift* from God and never a work (an accomplishment with merit) of man (Acts 13:48; 16:14; 18:27; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; 2 Peter 1:1). If God had not send someone to proclaim the Good News to a person, he would never have come to faith (Romans 10:13-17).

(3) The result of believing.

When a person believes the gospel,

- he receives the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:7-9; Galatians 3:2).

Other ways to state this same truth are:

- he is baptised with the Spirit (Acts 11:14-18; 15:7-11)
- he is sealed or marked with the seal consisting of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
- he is anointed with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21; 1 John 2:20)

But also the Holy Spirit is always a gift from God (Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17; 15:8) and the deposit (first down payment) given by God that guarantees what is to come (our inheritance) (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:11-14).

What a person receives is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, or Christ in his heart (Romans 8:9-10),

- he is born again.

Other ways to state this same truth are:

- he is born of God or born anew (from above) or born of the Spirit (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8)
- he is saved, that is, God has granted him repentance that leads to (eternal) life (Acts 11:14,18)
- he has received the Spirit, his heart is purified by faith and he is saved (Acts 15:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, 1 Peter 1:1-2)
- he is saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom God has poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus 3:5-6).

The apostle Paul mainly gives teaching about being baptised with the Spirit (Romans 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:11-13).

3. Being baptised with the Spirit in biblical salvation history.

Being baptised with the Spirit occurred the first time in history on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5). What Jesus had promised in John 7:37-39 was fulfilled on that day!

In the Bible there are two historical events in Gods salvation history in which people were baptised with the Spirit after some time they believed and were baptised with water. Why? Because both events had to do with the unfolding of Gods salvation history with regard to his Church:

- the first time was because Jesus Christ had not yet been glorified (at his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and enthronement) (John 7:37-39)
- and the second time was because Jesus Christ had given the keys of the kingdom to only his apostles (Matthew 16:18-19).

These two events are unique in salvation history. They describe the history of salvation and are not a teaching about the time when the baptism with the Spirit should take place. Thus, these two Bible passages may not be used to prove that being baptised with the Spirit is “a second blessing” that should take place at some time after a person has come to faith in Jesus Christ.

(1) The first Jewish Christians.

The first Jewish Christians believed and were baptised with water years before they were baptised with the Spirit. These about 120 Jewish disciples (Acts 1:15) had to wait until Jesus Christ as Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22) had been glorified before they could be baptised with the Spirit (that is, until the ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ had taken place) (*John 7:37-39; cf. 16:7-11). After Christ’s glorification they were indeed baptised with the Spirit (Acts 2:1-21). After Pentecost new believers do not have to wait for the baptism with the Spirit, because Christ had already been glorified! Later on that same Day of Pentecost the other about three thousand new believers received the Holy Spirit the very moment they believed (Acts 2:36-39).

(2) The first Samaritan (half Jewish) Christians.

The first Samaritan (half-Jewish) Christians believed and were baptised with water before they were baptised with the Spirit. They had to wait until the apostles of Jesus Christ as foundation of the Church (Ephesians 2:20) had opened the door of the Kingdom or the Church for them before they could be baptised with the Spirit (*Matthew 16:18-19; 18:18; John 20:21-23). When the apostles Peter and John had prayed for them, they too received the Holy Spirit, that is, they too were baptised with the Spirit (Acts 8:4-17).

Jesus built the foundation of his Church in the history of the world on his twelve apostles. The apostles of Christ founded the first historical congregations among the three major groups of people: the Jews (Acts 1-8), the half-Jews (Samaritans) (Acts 9-12) and the non-Jews (Gentiles) (Acts 13-28)(cf. Acts 1:8). Once the foundation had been laid, all people are baptised with the Spirit at the moment they believe in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:13).

(3) The first Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians.

The first Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians were baptised with the Spirit the very moment they believed (*Acts 10:47-48; 11:14-18; 15:7-11), because Jesus had already been glorified and because the apostle Peter was present to open the door of the kingdom for them.

4. Being baptised with the Spirit today.

After the historical outpouring of the Spirit on the first Jewish believers, the first Samaritan believers and the first Gentile believers (cf. Acts 1:8), people are baptised with the Spirit when they come to faith in Jesus Christ (*John 1:12-13; Acts 5:32; 19:2; Galatians 3:2; *Ephesians 1:13).

“Being baptised with the Spirit” is a synonym for “being born anew by the Spirit” (cf. John 3:3-8; Titus 3:4-8). Being baptised with the Spirit binds the believer indissolubly to Jesus Christ and causes him to share in all the phases of

Christ's completed work of salvation. Paul says, "All of you who were baptised (with the Spirit) into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ" (*Galatians 3:27).

5. Being baptised with the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 teaches that "being baptised with the Spirit" is *a once for all time event* at the beginning of the new life of the Christian (the aorist tense points to *a single event*). However, Ephesians 5:18 teaches that "being filled with the Spirit" is *a recurring event* that should take place many times in the Christian's life (the present tense points to *a continuous or ever recurring event*).

When a person is baptised with the Spirit, the Spirit comes to dwell permanently in his body and life for the first time and the believer begins to share in all the phases of the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-7).

However, when a believer is filled with the Spirit, the Spirit is already dwelling in him. Then the believer does not receive more of the Spirit, but rather the Spirit gets more or all the aspects of the life of the believer under His control (Ephesians 5:19-21).

6. Being baptised with the Spirit and being baptised with water.

The same word "baptism" (Greek: baptizō) is used for being baptised with the Spirit and for being baptised with water. Being baptised with the Spirit is *the invisible reality* of God's work and being baptised with water is *the visible sign* which God gives (via the Christian who baptises with water) to the believer to assure him that he has really been baptised with the Spirit (Acts 2:37-41; 10:47-48).

When people disconnect being baptised with water from being baptised with the Spirit it results in an unbiblical teaching. Then what man does in the baptism with water replaces what Christ does in the baptism with the Spirit. For example, some Christians teach that baptism with water (of infants or adults) administered by the Church pours God's grace into that person or causes rebirth. Rebirth/regeneration is then effected by man.

And when people disconnect being baptised with the Spirit from being baptised with water it also results in an unbiblical teaching. Then the being baptised with the Spirit becomes something different than being regenerated by the Spirit. For example: some Christians teach that being baptised with the Spirit is "a so-called second blessing" some time after he has been born again in which the believer receives special power and spiritual gifts (especially the speaking in tongues). The baptism with the Spirit is then not the same as rebirth/regeneration by the Spirit.

C. THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Always ask the question: Does the word "baptism" refer to baptism with the Spirit or to baptism with water?

With respect to Christ's completed work of salvation genuine Christian baptism is "being baptised with the Spirit" unto salvation (Acts 11:14-18)! "Being baptised with water" *symbolises and seals* this being baptised with the Spirit (*Acts 10:47-48).

With respect to the continuation of the old covenant in the new covenant, being physically circumcised in the Old Testament (*Romans 4:3,11-12) as well as being baptised with water in the New Testament (*Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-39; 22:16) *symbolise and seal* "the justification by faith" and thus "salvation".

1. *Matthew 28:19 refers to being baptised with water.

(1) What must happen?

People in all the nations on earth that are made disciples of Jesus Christ must be baptised with water by other believers in the *one Name* of the Triune God.

(2) What is the meaning?

The expression "in the name of" does not mean "on authority of", because that authority had already been given in the command of Jesus. The expression: "baptise in the name" (Greek: *eis to onoma*) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit symbolises that through the baptism of the Spirit the believers has been united to the One bearing this name (the God of the Bible). Matthew 28:19 indicates that the person is baptised with water as a visible sign that he *belongs* to the Triune God. The name does not need to be spoken at baptism with water, but may be pronounced. The believer is not brought into a relationship with Christ when another Christian baptises him with water, but when Jesus Christ baptises him with the Holy Spirit. He is baptised with water as a sign and seal that he has been baptised with the Spirit. The Spirit is the Representative of the Triune God in the believer (Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

God is not confined to the boundaries of the created universe. His divine nature transcends the time and space of the universe and therefore transcends also all scientific or mathematical descriptions of this universe. God transcends real time in the universe and can as it were move forward and backwards along an infinite time line that never touches or crosses the real time line of the created universe, which only moves forward. God in Christ entered the created time and space of the universe. God also transcends the three-dimensional space in the universe and his divine nature can thus be represented as a unity (Mark 12:29) and as a plurality: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

In the Bible God has revealed himself as one God with three inner distinctions within the unity of his Divine Nature. Being baptised with water by another Christian signifies and seals the following:

- *Before the creation* of the three-dimensional universe and the real time of this universe God the Father adopted the believer as his spiritual son or daughter (Ephesians 1:4-5).
- *In the past history* of this created universe God the Son has washed away all the sins of the believer by his precious blood (his death on the cross) (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7)
- *In the present time* in this created universe God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to be born again (anew, from above) (Titus 3:4-8), lives in him, sanctifies him and makes him subjectively a partner of everything he already possesses objectively in Jesus Christ. The believer has already been chosen, born again and justified. Now he becomes more holy in life and character. He will finally be completely glorified (Romans 8:29-30). The new believer grows as a disciple himself and eventually participates in making other people disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. *Mark 16:15-16 refers to being baptised with the Spirit.

(1) What must happen?

The Greek word “kai” can mean “and” (addition) or “that is to say” (explanation).

The gospel must be proclaimed in the whole world. “Whoever believes in Jesus Christ, *that is to say*” is baptised (with the Spirit), will be saved.” But whoever does not believe has not been baptised with the Spirit and will be condemned (doomed). The verse does not say: “And whoever has not been baptised with water, will be condemned”.

(2) What is the meaning?

People are not saved by being baptised with water by other believers, but by being baptised with the Spirit by Jesus Christ (Mark 1:8)! People are not born again by anything people do, but only by what God does (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8)! Believers are baptised with water (by other believers) as the visible sign and assurance of their baptism with the Spirit (by Jesus Christ). Note, although the believing murderer was not baptised with water, it did not prevent him from being with Jesus in Paradise that very same day (Luke 23:39-43)!

3. *Acts 2:37-41 and Acts 22:16 refer to being baptised with water.

(1) What happened?

The Jews who repented (that is, who believed in Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit) were baptised with water by other believers in (actually: on) the name of Jesus Christ. The expression “baptise with water in (on) the name of” (Greek: epi to onomati)⁶ Jesus Christ symbolises that the believer is baptised on the authority of Christ, his merit and claims. The believer is baptised with water because he has put his trust/faith in Jesus Christ and the merit of his accomplished work of salvation, has bound himself to Christ, acknowledges the claims of Christ, fully agrees with the teachings of Christ and has committed himself to obey Christ.

Also Paul repented (believed, received the Spirit) and was baptised with water three days after he repented (Acts 9:9) “calling on the name of Jesus Christ” (Greek: epikaleomai to onoma)⁷ (Acts 22:16). The expression “calling on (Greek: epikaleomai) the name of Christ” means:

- acknowledging his claims
- believing his teachings
- trusting in his accomplished work of salvation
- and commitment to his service

(Acts 9:14,21; 22:16; cf. Acts 2:21; Romans 10:12-14; 1 Corinthians 1:2).

The human baptiser baptises the new believer on authority of the commandment of Christ (Matthew 28:19) and the believer confesses his faith in Jesus Christ: he calls on the name of the Lord.

(2) What is the meaning?

Being baptised with water is the visible sign and seal that all the sins of the believer have been washed away. “But you were washed (the aorist tense points to a single event), you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). “God our Saviour saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out (the aorist tense points to a single event) on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:4-8).

The words “wash off/away” (Greek: apolouomai) (Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11) and “washing” (Greek: loutron) (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5) refer to the baptism with the Holy Spirit that is depicted visibly by the baptism with water. The new believer is completely forgiven, justified or saved (cf. Acts 15:7-9, he has received the Holy Spirit who has cleansed/purified his heart).

⁶ Greek: epi to onomati, “on the name of”

⁷ Greek: epikaleomai to onoma “calling on the name”

4. *Acts 10:47-48 refers to being baptised with water.

(Literally): “Can anyone refuse/deny/withhold (Greek: kólúó) water to baptise *once for all* (aorist passive) from those who have *once for all* received (aorist active) the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered that they be *once for all* baptised (aorist passive) (with water) in the name of Jesus Christ.”

(1) What happened?

The non-Jews (Gentiles) who believed in Jesus Christ were baptised with water by other believers “in the name of the Lord”. The expression “in the name of the Lord” (Greek: en to onomati) means the same as “on the name of the Lord”: on the authority of Christ, by confessing faith in him, by coming into a personal relationship with him, and by promising to obey him. The baptiser baptises the new believer on the authority of the command of Christ (Matthew 28:19) and the believer confesses his faith in Jesus Christ.

(2) What is the meaning?

Being baptised with water is the visible sign and seal that the believer has been baptised with the Spirit. He has received the Holy Spirit or has been born again by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 3:3-8; Titus 3:3-8).

5. *Romans 6:3-5 refers to being baptised with the Spirit.

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were *once for all* baptised (Greek: baptizó) (aorist passive) into Christ Jesus were baptised (Greek: baptizó) (aorist passive) into his death? We were therefore buried with (Greek: sunthaptó) (aorist passive) him through baptism (Greek: dia tou baptismatos) into death in order just as Christ was raised (Greek: egeiró) (aorist passive) from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Greek: peripateó) (subjunctive, aorist). If we have been united with him (Greek: sumfutos) (grown together) (ginomai) (perfect tense) like this in his death (Greek: tó homoiómati tou thanatou autou), we will *certainly* (future tense) also (be united with him) in his resurrection.”

Romans chapter 6 is NOT A TEACHING ABOUT HOW one ought to be baptised with water. BUT IS A TEACHING ABOUT WHAT happens when one is baptised with the Spirit! A person is never united to Christ by anything another man does (baptising him with water), only by what God does (baptising him with the Spirit)!

(1) What happens?

All people who believe in Jesus Christ are *once for all* baptised with the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus and thus also in his death. The expression “in (Greek: eis) Christ” and “in (Greek: eis) his death” means: being brought into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, especially with his death. The aorist time points to a single event. The death of Jesus Christ is indissolubly connected to his resurrection!

(2) What is the meaning?

Romans 6:3-4 teaches that at the moment a person is baptised with the Spirit (in connection with his faith in Christ) he is united to the death and burial of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago.

And Romans 6:5-8 teaches that at the moment a person is baptised with the Spirit (in connection with his faith in Christ) he is united to the resurrection of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago.

A person who has been baptised with the Spirit has been united to Christ’s death and to Christ’s resurrection two thousand years ago. Thus the believer also has died and has been resurrected.

(3) What has died?

The believer’s old nature! Because the new believer “has once for all become (literally) one plant together with Christ”, that is, has been made like Christ in his death (verse 5a), his “old self” (his unregenerate nature) (verse 6) has *once for all time* been crucified with Christ and his “body of sin” (his old human nature ruled by sin) (verse 6) has *once for all time* been made powerless (has been brought to an end)⁸. The power of the sinful nature (the indwelling sin) has *once for all time* been broken and the Christian is no longer a slave of his old sinful nature! Although a Christian (a person that has been baptised with the Spirit) is not yet perfect and still falls into certain sins, he never remains in that sin. If he remains in that sin or continues to live in sin he cannot be a born-again Christian (cf. 1 John 1:8 -2:2; 3:6-9. Note that the present tenses express “continuing to sin”!

“Anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (verse 7).” Literally it says: “The person who has *once for all time* died (aorist tense), is henceforth justified and set free from (the enslaving power of) sin (perfect tense). The perfect tense expresses the continuation of the condition that has been arrived. The believer receives the judicial state of righteousness (he is set free from the guilt and punishment of sin, he has been forgiven) and the moral state of holiness (he is set free from the power of sin)!

God’s declaration with regard to the former sinner has *judicial meaning* (He is free from the guilt and punishment of sin) and *moral meaning* (he is free from the power of sin). He is set free and remains free! The believer (the person who has been baptised with the Spirit) may rest assured that he has definitely been justified from sin, that is, that God has imputed (ascribed) the righteousness of Christ (and earned by Christ) to him. “Imputed” means: God has declared him righteous and regards and treats him from now on as perfectly righteous and has set him free from the enslaving power

⁸ Greek: katargeó

of his sinful nature! The future tense in verse 8 does not express the future, but rather certainty: the believer who died with Christ now certainly lives with Christ!

Christ died to sin (to take the sin of the believer away and reconcile him with God) (verse 10, cf. 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). And the Christian also died with respect to sin (he no longer lives in sin) (verse 11-12, cf. 1 Peter 4:1-3). This definite (once for all time) break with sin is the identity of the Christian!

(4) What has been raised?

The believer's new nature! The new believer "has (literally) grown as one plant together (Greek: *sumfutos*) with Christ", that is to say, "he has been made like Christ", not only in his death (Romans 6:5a), but also in his resurrection (Romans 6:5b). Therefore the new believer CAN, WILL and SHALL now once for all time walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4) and later his body will be resurrected from the dead (Romans 6:5). Because the Christian has by grace through faith been bound to Christ (who is the Living One forever) (Revelation 1:18), the new believer CAN, WILL and SHALL continue to fight against sin and conquer the expressions of his sinful nature! The future tense in verse 5 does not express the future, but rather certainty!

(5) The causal relation between death and resurrection.

There is a causal relation between the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (verse 5). Likewise the state/position of righteousness and holiness of the Christian is inextricably bound to the new life-style of the Christian in which he lives righteous and holy. Every Christian that has been baptised with the Spirit has received a new state (position) in Christ and a new way of life/lifestyle (process). The death and resurrection of Christ makes the state and the lifestyle of the Christian absolutely certain! The Christian is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and can, will and shall live the new (righteous and holy) life!

Because the Christian has been baptised with the Spirit (of Christ) (Romans 8:9-10), he shares in the death and burial of Christ in order to also share in the resurrection life of Christ! A Christian cannot share the benefits (merits) of the death of Christ except he also shares the power of his resurrected life. On the one hand a Christian can only live a holy life when he has been justified. No one can live holy without being justified! On the other hand a Christian can only know for certain that he has been justified when he lives holy. No one can be sure of salvation (justification) unless he lives holy! Just as "works" prove that "faith" is genuine (James 2:17,22), likewise "sanctification" proves that "justification" has really taken place (Romans 6:7,12-13,18-19)! "Holy" means "separated" from the sinful world in order to live "dedicated" to God's will. In the Bible the state and the lifestyle of the Christian are inseparable! The state as a position without the lifestyle as a continuous process is not possible! Likewise, the new lifestyle without the righteous state in Christ is impossible! A tree is recognised by its fruit (Matthew 7:16-18)!

(6) The promise and the responsibility.

The Christian must appropriate the promise of God. He must count himself "dead to sin", but "alive to God in Christ" (*Romans 6:11). He is no longer "under the law", that is, he no longer stands condemned to be doomed due to God's righteous requirement against sinners (Romans 6:14a; cf. Galatians 3:10-14), but he is now forever "under grace", that is, he is forever graciously forgiven, and can, will and shall continually live dependent on the grace of Christ (Romans 6:14b; cf. John 1:16-17; Galatians 4:21-31).

Dedication to the responsibility of the Christian. The Christian must dedicate his life to a holy and righteous way of living (*Romans 6:13,19; cf. 12:1-2). The appropriation of the righteous state (justification) and the dedication to the holy lifestyle (sanctification) may never be separated in Christian teaching or life! To put it in another way: You cannot simply believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour without obeying him as your Lord (Luke 6:46)!

(7) Being baptised with the Spirit and with water.

Being baptised with the Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ and to all the phases of his work of salvation:

- before time: the Christian has already been elected
- in time: the Christian is called, regenerated, justified, sanctified and glorified (cf. John 10:28; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9).

Jesus Christ has become the Representative of the Christian in death and in resurrection (Romans 5:17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22). The Christian now shares in Christ's completed work of salvation and that has an effect on:

- his past: he has been born again and has received a righteous and holy state before God, 1 Corinthians 1:30)
- on his present: he is continually transformed into the likeness of Christ, he becomes more sanctified (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:13-26)
- and on his future: his spirit and his body will be conformed to that of Christ)(1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21).

Being baptised with water is a *sign and seal* that the believer through being baptised with the Spirit has been brought into a personal relationship to the death and resurrection of Christ. This relationship results in a once for all time break with sin and embracing of the new life. The baptism with water is particularly a sign and seal of possessing *the judicial state* of being righteous in God's eyes and *the moral state* of his holiness. These are inseparable from *his present lifestyle* that consists of his continual sanctification and his future glorification (cf. Romans 8:30; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; John 10:28). "Glorification" means complete conformity to Christ in his spirit (1 John 3:2) and in his body (Philippians 3:21).

6. *1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to being baptised with the Spirit.

“For we were all *once for all* baptised (Greek: baptizó) (aorist passive) by one Spirit (Greek: en heni pneumatí) into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all *once for all* given the one Spirit (Greek: hen pneuma) to drink (Greek: potizó) (aorist passive).”

(1) What happens?

All people who believe in Jesus Christ are *once for all* baptised (by Christ) with (Greek: en) one Spirit into (Greek: eis) one Body. The expression “with (Greek: en) one Spirit” means that the Holy Spirit has descended upon all genuine Christians, has been poured out on them and now indwells them. The expression “into (Greek: eis) one Body” means that all genuine Christians belong to the one world wide Body of Christ (not to any particular denomination). They have all been given the one and same Spirit to drink. This means that all Christians in the Body of Christ are imbued with (in the sense of indwelt and possessed by) the same Holy Spirit.

(2) What is the meaning? Being baptised with the Spirit (the rebirth) unites all the believers in the world to Jesus Christ (the Head) and also to one another (as members of the Body). Christians now share the life of Christ and the life of Christ’s Body, the Church, through the one Holy Spirit who lives in them (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22). Christians may never think of themselves as separated from (disconnected from) Christ (the Holy Spirit) or from his Body (the Church, their local church, other Christians).

According to the Bible there is within the genuine Christian faith no room for sectarianism, pure individualism and complete independence! There is also no room for parties or church denominations in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:3-4)! “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. It is a teaching and the prayer of Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 4:3; cf. John 17:21-23)!

7. *Galatians 3:26-29 refers to being baptised with the Spirit.

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised (Greek: baptizó) (aorist passive) into Christ have clothed yourselves with (Greek: enduomai) (aorist medium) Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

(1) What happens?

All people who believe in Jesus Christ have *once for all* been baptised with the Spirit into (Greek: eis) Christ. The word “in” (Greek: eis) means that they have been brought into an essential relationship with Christ.

(2) What is the meaning?

Being baptised with the Spirit unites Christians from all (Jewish and non-Jewish) nations with Christ and thus also with one another. All genuine Christians have clothed themselves with Christ. They have *once for all time* put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24). Together Christians from every tribe, language, people and nation are now Abraham’s children and heirs of all the promises that God has made to Abraham and to his children. They are now a part of God’s one (Old Testament and New Testament) covenant people and have a share in all the promises God has ever made to his covenant people (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20).

8. *Colossians 2:11-13 refers to baptism with the Spirit.

“In him you were also circumcised (Greek: peritemnó) (aorist passive), in the putting off (stripping, removal) (Greek: apekdisis) of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him (Greek: sunthaptó) (aorist passive) in baptism (Greek: baptismos) and raised with him (Greek: sunegeiró) (aorist passive) through your faith in the power of God, who raised (Greek: egeiró) (aorist active) him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with (Greek: suzaopoeó) (aorist active) Christ.”

(1) What happens?

There are two symbols: circumcision and baptism. Together they symbolise the death of the old and the resurrection of the new.

The first symbol is the Old Testament circumcision: all people that believe in Jesus Christ have *once for all been spiritually circumcised* with the circumcision of Christ (a reference to his death on the cross). Through this their sinful nature (literally: the body of the flesh) has been put off. Christ circumcises the hearts of people through his Spirit (*Romans 2:28-29). The symbol of the spiritual circumcision *emphasises the dying (putting off) of the old sinful man.*

The second symbol is the New Testament baptism: all people that believe in Jesus Christ have *once for all been spiritually buried and raised* with (the burial and resurrection of) Christ in the baptism (with the Spirit) in connection with their faith (that is, their faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead). The symbol of the baptism with the Spirit *emphasises the resurrection of the new born-again man.*

(2) What is the meaning?

The baptism with the Spirit (the regeneration) unites all believers with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. Thereby their old sinful nature, that had caused their spiritual death before their conversion (Ephesians 2:1-3), has been cut away and all their sins have been washed away (cf. Acts 22:16), that is, all their sins have been forgiven. And thereby they receive a new (born again or born from above) nature that is controlled by the Spirit and makes them new in every respect.

Just as the death of Christ is inseparable from his resurrection, so the removal of the power of the old unregenerate nature (by *circumcision* of the heart by the Spirit) is inseparable from the reception of the new born-again nature (by the *baptism* with the Spirit)!

Christian baptism with water is on the one hand the visible sign and seal of the invisible spiritual circumcision (the *circumcision of the heart with emphasis on the death of the old nature*) and on the other hand the visible sign and seal of the invisible spiritual baptism (the *baptism with the Spirit with emphasis on the resurrection of the new nature*). Both the death of the old nature and the resurrection of the new nature are the work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 2:29). The invisible baptism with the Spirit is expressed in the visible baptism with water (cf. Mark 1:8; Acts 10:47-48)!

9. *Ephesians 4:5 refers to baptism with the Spirit.

Just as there is only one Spirit, one Lord and one God and Father of all believers, so there is only one Body, one faith and one baptism (Greek: hen baptisma). This one baptism is the baptism with the Spirit by Jesus Christ, because the baptism with water by a man can never unite a believer to the Triune God or to the Body of Christ!

10. Conclusions with regard to Christian baptism.

(1) The meaning of the baptism with the Spirit.

Christian baptism is above all a being baptised with the Spirit.

Then it is also a being baptised with water (Mark 1:8).

The baptism with water is the visible sign and seal of the invisible baptism with the Spirit (Acts 10:47-48).

By being baptised with the Spirit the baptised person has been united to the Triune God and to the Body of Christ and now shares in all the phases of Christ's work of salvation that has an effect on his past (regeneration, justification), present (holiness and sanctification) and future (glorification).

The Bible speaks of one baptism (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13). This can only refer to the being baptised with the Spirit, without which no-one can be unified to Christ (Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:10-12) or to the Body of Christ (the Church, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13) and without which no-one can be regenerated (John 3:3-8), sanctified (Romans 8:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2) or glorified (2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

Being baptised with the Spirit leads to unity with Christ and participation in his completed work of salvation: Galatians 3:27 says: "All of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ". By being baptised with the Spirit the believer has been bound inextricably to Christ (Galatians 3:27). Thereby Christ has become the Representative of all Christians (Romans 5:12,17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22). And thereby all Christians now share in the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ that has an effect on their position in Christ, their present lifestyle in the world and their future destiny (Romans 6:3,5).

Being baptised with the Spirit has an effect on your past.

- You are now born again (Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:4-8). You are now a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). You have now been made spiritually alive (Ephesians 2:5).
- You are now justified: all your sins are now washed away. You are now completely forgiven (Acts 2:37-41; 22:16).
- You now share in the perfect righteousness and holiness of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 4:24).
- You are now no longer separated from Christ (Ephesians 2:12), but are now in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and Christ is now in you (Colossians 1:27).
- You now belong to God's one covenant people (Galatians 3:26-29; cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10).
- You have already now been brought out of the dominion of darkness into Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13). You are now a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- You are now a member of the Body of Christ: the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

Being baptised with the Spirit has an effect on your present.

- You have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). The world has been crucified to you and you to the world (Galatians 6:14). You keep your old nature crucified and live out of your new nature. This leads to daily conversion and renewal.
- With Christ on the throne of your heart you can, will and shall live a holy life (Romans 6:1-14). You grow to greater conformity to Christ.
- You are a growing disciple of Christ. You follow him and learn from him to become a mature Christian (Matthew 28:19).

- You participate in spreading the kingdom of God and in the tasks of the worldwide Church and local congregation (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

Being baptised with the Spirit has an effect on your future.

- You long to be with Christ forever (Philippians 1:23).
- Your spirit will then be like that of Christ in his perfect human nature (1 John 3:2).
- Your body will then be like that of Christ in his perfect human nature (Philippians 3:21).
- You will then live forever with Christ and all God’s Old and New Testament covenant people on the new earth (Revelation 21:1-5,9-14).
- You will then see God in the face of Jesus Christ (Revelation 22:4).

(2) The meaning of being baptised with water.

Being baptised with water is the visible sign and seal of being baptised with the Spirit (Mark 1:8; Acts 10:47-48). It *symbolises* being baptised with the Spirit and *certifies* that the baptism with the Spirit has really taken place.

(3) The purpose of being baptised with water.

Through the baptism with water God gives a testimony to the believer (Matthew 28:19).

Through baptising with water *God* in Christ Jesus and by means of the baptiser *gives a testimony* to the new believer! The baptiser says: “I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” In the presence of other people God gives to the believer a visible sign that is at the same time a seal. Baptising with water *signifies* something and at the same time *certifies* something.

Baptising with water is not simply a religious ceremony or a symbolic incorporation into Christ or his Church. Baptising with water symbolises that the baptising with the Spirit has really taken place.

Through the baptising with the Spirit the new believer:

- has really been incorporated into the death and resurrection of Christ
- has really been incorporated into the Body of Christ (the Church)
- and thus genuinely shares in Christ’s completed work of salvation.

Baptising with water is a symbolic action whereby God gives the new believer a visible sign and seal that gives significance and assurance

- that he has been baptised with the Spirit (he has really received the Holy Spirit)
- that he has been united to the Triune God
- that all his sins in the past, present and future has been forgiven (that he has really been justified or saved)
- and that he is a member of the Body of Christ (God’s kingdom, God’s covenant people).

Note that nowhere in the Bible is the baptising with water associated with *membership* of a local congregation or of any specific denomination!

At the baptism with water the believer also gives a testimony to God and other people (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

During the baptising with water the new believer also gives a testimony to God and the people present. The believer “calls on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16) through a prayer or in a song, openly confesses his faith in Jesus Christ and in God’s revelation in the Bible and declares his resolve to obey God’s Word in a practical way.

The baptising with water is never the means to effectuate the baptising with the Spirit or to cause the reception of the Spirit. It also is not meant to be the method to wash away sins.

The baptising with water does not pour God’s grace into a person so that he is enabled to do good works, by which he would be saved. The baptising with water also does not cause rebirth by the Spirit. The baptising with water is not a magical ritual.

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[REACTIONS] PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
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Take turns in the group to pray short to God in response to what you have learned today.
Or divide the group into two’s or three’s and pray to God in response to what you have learned today.

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples and build Christ’s Church.
2. Preach, teach or study the teaching of “Christian baptism” together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Galatians 1 - 4 each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.

4. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (2) Same life-goals: Amos 3:3. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Bible study. Prepare the next Bible study at home. John 5. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on building Christ's Church. Include your notes on personal time with God, your memorisation notes, your teaching notes and this preparation.