

Study 0016

Scripture Text: Hebrews 6:2

Having laid the foundational truth of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, we now move on to the truth about baptisms. It is important for us to understand that baptism is through and through, a matter of faith, hence the necessity of our faith toward God; rather than based on human reasoning or wisdom, or anything else, for that matter. Indeed, only in one instance is there a physical/visible act of baptism; and even that is a spiritual truth represented by a physical act. Also, it is important for us to note that the bible talks of “the doctrine of baptisms” as in more than one baptism.

The word ‘baptism’ derives from the Greek noun ‘*baptisma*’ which denotes the process of immersion, submersion, and emergence. Baptism is itself derived from the Greek word ‘*bapto*’ which means ‘to dip’. The most appropriate implication of baptism is best associated with the Greek word ‘*baptizo*’ which means ‘to baptize’. ‘*baptizo*’ is used to describe the dyeing of garments (where the garment is dipped into the dye solution, and when it is taken out takes on the colour of the dye solution—its characteristic); or the drawing of water from a vessel, by dipping a cup into the vessel and drawing water with it (the cup being filled with the content of the vessel—water). It is also used to describe being overwhelmed with questions (as in surrendering to God’s will even in unpleasant things).

From the foregoing, baptism in general, can be said to be a process of taking on the nature of the medium into which one is baptized; or taking a part of the medium into which one is baptized; or being completely overwhelmed by the medium into which one is baptized, and thereby being controlled by the medium; or being plunged into a medium and thus being smeared with the medium, as in when one dips a piece of bread into a bowl of stew.

More specifically however, baptism is the process whereby a person who has already confessed his sins and received God’s forgiveness and salvation; is made to identify with Christ in every respect—Christ’s life, suffering, death, and resurrection; and thus belong to Christ, as well as possess His nature—character and conduct. Baptism is like a phase in the life of one who is born again, whereby there is a permanent change in the life of the individual as he transitions from one aspect of his Christian walk to another. An illustration of this would be that of a man who is moving from one room to another through a door. Once the door is opened and he moves into the next room, the door is shut permanently behind him and he cannot return to the former room. Thus, baptism is like a passage of rites for the Christian, and speaks of leaving behind a former life and entering into a new life, never to return to the old life again (**Romans 6:3-4; Hebrews 6:4-6**).

Every baptism has the following: (a) the person to be baptized; (b) the baptizer; and, (c) the medium into which be baptized is baptized. There is also the significance of each baptism. There are four baptisms that every Christian must undergo, and they are; (a) baptism into One Body, i.e., the Body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:13**); (b) water baptism or what is now

commonly called, Christian baptism (**Matthew 28:19**); (c) Holy Spirit baptism or baptism in the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5**); and, (d) baptism with fire (**Luke 3:16**). These four baptisms are significant in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ, respectively, as follows: (a) the believer is **positioned** in the Body of Christ; (b) the believer **publicly identifies** with Christ in His death and resurrection; (c) the believer receives **power** to live like Christ did in character and conduct (**Acts 1:8**); and (d) the believer is **purged and purified** as a result of deprivations and persecution in the course of his Christian walk, and by which God is glorified (**Hebrews 5:5-9**).

At this point, it is important to note that the baptism of John the Baptist is not among the four baptisms that every believer must go through. Indeed, John's baptism was a baptism unto repentance; and was a ceremonial act of having one's sins washed away, signifying that they have confessed of their sins and repented of them, and will no longer engage in such (**Acts 19:1-6; Matthew 3:11**). The closest equivalent to John's baptism is the repentance from sins which makes the believer in Jesus Christ a new creation in Christ.

EXERCISE

[A] Baptism requires _____.

[B] Please state which of the statements below is true or false:

- (a) The third foundational truth is about baptisms, not baptism.
- (b) Baptism is the process of immersion, submersion, and emergence.
- (c) Baptism is permanently bidding farewell to an old life, and entering into a new life.
- (d) Baptism in some cases confers on an object, the nature of the medium into which it has been dipped.
- (e) For baptism to be said to have taken place there must be a baptizer, the person to be baptized, and the medium of baptism.
- (f) For a complete Christian experience none of the baptisms is optional.
- (g) Through the various baptisms, the believer in Jesus Christ, is positioned in the Body of Christ; publicly identifies himself with Christ; receives power to live as he should; and, is purged and purified through persecution and suffering.
- (h) When we use the word 'baptisms', we do not include John's baptism.

[C] Complete the table below.

Baptizer	Medium	Baptism	Type
		Baptism into One Body	Positional
	Water	Christian baptism	
Jesus Christ	Holy Spirit		
Jesus Christ			Purging/ Purification

[D] The closest explanation of John's baptism is _____ leading to _____.