

THE BATTLE FOR

**BIBLICAL
BAPTISM**

AN EXEGESIS OF SPIRIT AND WATER BAPTISM

LUIS C. RUIZ, PHD

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**BY
Luis C. Ruiz, Ph.D.**

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DEDICATION

Every single thing we do in this life is possible because God gives us the ability. Whether we see, read, write or think only comes because of God's grace. In this manner, God uses us even though we are deeply flawed. It is Him that I must first thank. Along these lines, God also blessed me with a family without which I know this work would never have been possible. They often act as a mirror uncovering what I might have never noticed alone. I want to thank my editors (Paul Baran, Josh Bakr and my wife, Delia) who spent many hours providing me with valuable insight (and corrections). I also want to thank Dr. & Mrs. Williams for their ministry and love of the brethren. Last, I want to thank the many saints and local churches that have prayed and supported us over the last 20+ years. Our Lord Jesus used them in ways they may never realize.

Luis C. Ruiz, Ph.D.
May, 2020

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CHAPTER ONE – WORSHIP IN TRUTH

"To please God we must obey him. To obey God we must properly worship Him. To properly worship God we must properly interpret His precious Words. To properly interpret His Words we must submit to Him and His Spirit of Truth. And to submit to God we must rid ourselves of us." (Dr. Luis C. Ruiz)

In His infinite goodness, God has given the Church many spiritual gifts and blessings. If submitted to correctly and wisely, these gifts allow souls within the body of Christ to grow into maturity all the while bringing glory to the Creator of life. This fact encapsulates every aspect of the Christian's walk with God as they grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

While the above truth may appear to be a relatively simple proposition to remember, it is often difficult to implement and even more difficult to maintain. When this ensues, believers will inevitably not grow in the Lord and not truly glorify God. Why? Because they are not worshipping Him in the true Spirit and in the Biblical truth as spoken by the Lord Jesus to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)

Sadly, there are many born-again believers, along with those who profess themselves as Christians, which are not worshipping God in Spirit and in truth. Stated oppositely, it literally means that they are worshipping God in a false or untruthful manner. It also means that they are worshipping God with their soul (emotions, intellect or experience) and not from their born-again spirit. This false worship can only stem from incorrectly applying or willfully ignoring the plain, common-sense, contextual, literal, grammatical method of interpretation used by Jesus and His Apostles. This is not a new phenomenon, as throughout the almost 2000 year history of the church every area of worship from giving, pastoral qualifications, the assembly of believers, the Lord's Supper etc. has been under spiritual attack. Over time every one of these areas of worship was mistakenly understood and eventually falsely practiced.

Baptism Under Attack

One area of worship that has been under perpetual spiritual attack since the early church is that of God-ordained baptism...more specifically the "doctrine of baptisms". This assault isn't surprising since water baptism has been practiced first within Biblical Judaism as demonstrated by the ministry of John the Baptist and second, practiced within the church body since Pentecost. Merge Spirit baptism into the doctrinal equation and it becomes evident how truth gets muddied and confusion reigns. The result being that the church body gets splintered while individual believers in Jesus Christ do not grow toward maturity.

It must be noted that this book is not an all-encompassing treatise on every single minor nuance

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pertaining to Biblical baptisms. However, this study will provide a detailed and comprehensive account of both water and Spirit baptism in their proper literary context. The book will also present the reader with clear exposition in order to rightly identify which type of baptism is being addressed.

This work also endeavors to breakdown the major fundamental elements of this very critical and essential issue in a Christian's walk with God. I specifically say 'essential' because there are some teachers and scholars that will carelessly say that knowledge and correct practice of the baptisms are not essential in Christianity. Some will even recklessly state that baptismal truths are not important...that they are tertiary at best. These "teachers" are undeniably saying that there are no truths associated with Biblical baptism...in effect injecting relativistic humanism into God's eternal veracities.

One other point about essentials versus non-essentials: while the proper knowledge and practice of the doctrine of baptisms may most times not be essential for eternal salvation, it is 100% unequivocally essential for growth in Christ; essential for progressive sanctification. When one reads God's inspired and preserved Scriptures, it becomes starkly apparent that almost all of it is not required for salvation (faith in Christ) but rather fully required (essential) for maturity in the Lord Jesus. Hence, if you adopt the "non-essential" mantra of some mainstream evangelical voices, then you would have to disregard 99% of the Bible as not having vitally important truths to embrace for godly living.

At this point, it would also be worthy to acknowledge that the understanding and teaching of Biblical baptism initially appears to be simple and mostly straightforward. However, when one begins to truly study the Scriptures, one quickly realizes the depth of the content. And as in all the major teachings of God, this results in much confusion about what the Bible actually says and commands about baptism.

This chaotic and divided approach toward baptisms in the body of Christ also comes through pride...the arrogance of man. This pride, in league with the wiles of Satan, creates a tempest that disorients many believers. In Luke 11:17, our Lord Jesus addresses this point in a slightly different context:

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

Where there is confusion, there is division; this is what we see throughout the church, universally and locally. Thus, once a house (the church) is divided against itself, it begins to implode and eventually loses its ability to impart salt and light.

The Original Languages

This lovely doctrine of baptisms is one we can comprehend more fully when we begin to unravel what the original inspired languages state. In this case, we look at the language of the New Testament...Greek. Phonetically pronounced, here we find the Greek nouns "baptismos", "baptisma" and "baptistace" along with the Greek verbs "baptidzo" and "bapto". A simple reading of these Greek words clearly indicate that they were transliterated (not translated) into English words such

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as baptism and baptize. If these words would have been translated instead of transliterated into English the translation would almost unanimously be to immerse or sink.

The one instance where with the verb "baptidzo" does not mean immersion is noted in Luke 11:38.

And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

Here the context clearly depicts that "baptidzo" is used to indicate our Master had not "washed" or bathed Himself before dinner. Other Greek verbs (such as "niptō" and "louō") are commonly translated into "wash". Hence, like in all other Biblical words, the context will drive the true meaning. (This treatise will later illustrate how the context will repeatedly drive the correct sense.)

Surprisingly, baptism (water or spiritual) is never mentioned in the Old Testament. We are only presented vague pictures or allusions of it in prior covenants or dispensations. Many have described the Israelite crossing of the Jordan River as being typological of New Testament baptism. In contrast, the worldwide flood of Noah and the Red Sea crossing are presented as reverse typologies. The Mosaic Law also outlines the washing of individuals, foods and other items again presenting vague allusions to the doctrine of baptisms.

Most Biblically-based scholars correctly describe baptism as a public demonstration that is exclusive to both the preparation for entering into the church age and for this age. (This will be covered more extensively throughout the work.) Hence, along with the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's Supper, the

Rapture and other attributes, baptism is only for the church...the body of Christ. (These are just a few reasons why the church couldn't start with Abraham as reformed/covenant theologians postulate.) The Bible in several places calls these events mysteries since they were not clearly prophetically outlined in the Old Testament. Some of the verses indicating these mysteries are found in Romans 11:25; 16:25; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Ephesians 3:9; 5:32; Colossians 1:26-27. Essentially, anything in the Epistles not prophesied in the Old Testament is touted as a mystery.

The Lord's Water Baptism

Along the lines of immersion, it is often forgotten that our Lord Jesus was baptized aka immersed. Reading Matthew 3:13-16:

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (Matt 3:13) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (Matt 3:14) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (Matt 3:15) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (Matt 3:16)

Jesus Christ voluntarily baptized himself. Joseph and Mary did not take Him to be baptized as an infant...they only took him to dedicate and circumcise him. So Jesus participated in all three. However, Jesus, as a man

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(Immanuel) submitted Himself to the Father in heaven. So if circumcision replaced baptism as a few propose, then why did Jesus get circumcised and later immersed? (This will also be addressed later.)

The passage also details that Christ allowed Himself to be submersed because the Bible specifies that Christ rose from the river waters. If it were only a little sprinkling of water on the head it does not make sense to go into the river. All John the Baptist needed to do was to bring a container of water and pour it over Jesus.

As we delve deeper into our study we find that nowhere in the Bible do we find someone who is water baptized that did not request it...say for example an infant. We also never find a single example of sprinkling. (Later in the work we will Biblically reveal how both are teachings of man not of God.)

Returning to the original language, the Greek verb for baptism ("baptidzo") literally means to immerse, to dunk or to submerge completely. Of the 126 times we find the word in the Bible, only on a couple of occasions does it mean to be washed. In those instances, we are clearly guided by the passage's context. This is important to know when one studies the doctrine of baptisms in the Bible.

The Doctrine of Baptisms

Building on this thought, Hebrews 6:2 speaks of the doctrine of baptisms (plural) clearly indicating that there is more than one type of baptism.

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:2)

Looking at it from the highest macro level, there are two kinds of baptisms or immersions: spiritual and water. Much of the confusion and division in the body of Christ comes from people incorrectly interpreting if the Bible is describing spiritual baptism or water baptism.

The Sources of Heresy

This author, as a Bible teacher, evangelist and preacher, acknowledges that some passages in the Bible are very difficult to interpret. But like any doctrinal error, false teaching or heresy they typically emanate from one of several sources.

- Many believers and teachers lack of Bible knowledge because they have not diligently studied. Sadly, some have never read the whole Bible.
- Some believers and teachers are not submitted to the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth.
- Some teachers may not be born-again. They are professors not possessors!
- Some pastors and teachers desire being liked versus possibly offending someone with a Scriptural truth. For many it is just easier to get along.
- Gain of money or as the Bible calls it “filthy lucre”. They may say, “They are paying me so why rock-the-boat.”

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- Some are emissaries of Satan. 2 Corinthians 11:15 tells us that Satan's ministers can be transformed to look like ministers of righteousness whose purpose is to seek, kill and destroy.

In spite of these obstacles, which many of us have been exposed to, we will forge ahead and begin to scrutinize the inner working of the doctrine of baptisms.

Speaking specifically of spiritual baptism, we will study that there is only one for the believer and it occurs when a person trusts Jesus as God and Savior...when one is born again. There are several verses on this beautiful truth.

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5)

Here as in Matthew 3:10 and Luke 3:16, we read of the still future arrival of what we know today as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And to eliminate confusion, the Holy Spirit has always existed but had never before baptized a human...never made a permanent home next to the spirit of a person after faith.

In Acts 10, we read a passage that records what happened when the Apostle Peter preached to the first converted Gentiles. This passage clearly distinguishes spiritual baptism and water baptism.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. (Acts 10:44) And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the

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Holy Ghost. (Acts 10:45) For they heard them speak with tongues (literal languages with structure not gibberish), and magnify God. Then answered Peter, (Acts 10:46) Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? (Acts 10:47) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:48) (emphasis added)

We read in verse 45 how the Holy Spirit baptized or fell on the Gentiles (not the Jews; not the Samaritans) and in verses 47-48, after receiving the gift of God's Spirit, the focus shifts to them being baptized by water. In this passage, God clearly contrasts what it is to receive the Spirit of God...to be spiritually baptized with the act of being baptized by water. They are two separate things: one is to enter the body of Christ...to be saved; the latter is about being obedient, offering a public testimony and receiving blessings. Later we'll spend time on developing that water baptism is an external/public depiction of what God has done on the inside.

A passage that gives us more clarity on this doctrine is found in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17.

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; (1Cor 1:14) Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. (1Cor 1:15) And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. (1Cor 1:16) For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to

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preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (1Cor 1:17)

Christ did not send Paul to baptize by water but to preach the Gospel of eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. For the Apostle Paul, it was weightier to bring souls to Christ. If water baptism were essential for salvation (or to be part of the Bride of Christ) then he would have done it. But since water baptism was not a requirement to go to heaven or be Christ's Bride, the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul did not prioritize it.

Essential for Growth

On the other hand, although it isn't necessary to be baptized by water to go to heaven, God provides us with many clear Scriptural examples and directives so that we could follow them. These Biblical examples are given for our sake...in order to bless us. So while water baptism is not essential for salvation it is essential for growth. We'll address this topic later in the book.

In addition, some mistakenly teach that a Christian can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit post-salvation. And although there are some hard-to-understand passages (which we'll cover extensively), one of the principles of Bible interpretation is that one establishes doctrine on clear and easy-to-understand references. One uses the more understandable verses/passages to understand the more difficult ones. Using this principle we turn to 1 Corinthians 12:12-13:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized

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into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Verse 12 states that all that are born again, regenerated, saved are of the same body...the metaphorical body of Christ. In verse 13, we read that **all** who are in the body of Christ were baptized into one body. Whether Jewish or Gentile, **all** who have believed that Jesus is God and Savior have received the same Holy Spirit. This clearly says that all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit. There is no-one that is saved...that is going to heaven that does not have the baptism/indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. This is further established by Ephesians 4:5-6

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

There is only one Lord, one faith and one spiritual baptism into the body of Christ. As the Bible says, that baptism occurs when we are justified and adopted by God. This happens at the beginning of our journey with God...when we first become born again.

In summarizing this initial chapter, let's outline some of its more significant points.

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs when one accepts Jesus as God and Savior. (This is fully covered in chapters five through eight.)
- Spirit baptism gives you entrance to the body of Christ.

- A false gospel says that one needs to be baptized by water to go to heaven. (This is fully covered in chapter eleven.)
- In this church age, there is no second work of the Holy Spirit or a spiritual baptism that occurs after salvation. The instances where this took place was when the Holy Spirit was being introduced during the establishment of the Church. (This is fully covered in chapters five through eight.)
- What happens after the initial Holy Spirit baptism is described in the Bible as "being filled by the Spirit". (This is covered in chapter nine.)

Doctrinal yet Devotional

In concluding this first chapter, a couple of points should be addressed. While this treatise is largely doctrinal, as described earlier, it greatly overlaps with how one obeys and worships our Mighty God. In this way, the book becomes a devotional and guide to some areas of Christian living.

Additionally, this book is meant to assist believers that are struggling to comprehend what occurs at the moment of salvation and what happens later in our journey with God. Many are in bondage because they have been instructed to seek eternal salvation in one of two ways: First, via an emotional experience through a so-called second blessing; second, via the work of water baptism. Tragically, these views make a mockery of Ephesians 2:8-9.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith;
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of*

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God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Many well-intended souls have simply not been taught the simplicity of receiving the gift of salvation by faith in the Deity and work of Jesus Christ. Once you trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and God you are indwelled (baptized) by the Holy Spirit and given God's power to truly overcome your struggles and uncertainties. It is after you are given this supernatural strength that you can start trusting Him in other areas of your life and can start doing works for Him. This is an amazing promise offered first to whosoever believes and afterwards to whosoever submits.

When we are assured of how to receive eternal salvation and what is subsequently needed to grow in Christ's grace then we can follow and obey His decrees. The outcome of trusting these truths allow us to better rest in Jesus' gentle yoke. It is only then that we can have a more abundant, more joyful life. This is what we should all desire. Amen!