

Baptize

(βαπτίζω = 'baptizo')

To dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk), to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe, to overwhelm

Acts 1:5, "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." The NT speaks explicitly of people being "baptized in" (or "with") the Holy Spirit in only 6 places (Mat. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:16). In each of these scriptures, baptism in the Holy Spirit is compared and contrasted with the water baptism of John using almost identical language. This language is very important to those who wish to understand what baptism "in" (or "with") the Holy Spirit means. The baptism of John and that in the Spirit is alike in that both are accomplished by full immersion. The verb used to describe these baptisms is *baptizo*, meaning to bathe or immerse. However, the baptism of John is performed through the use of water (physical substance) and the other with the Holy Spirit Himself.

In the three passages in the Gospels and in Acts 1:5, the promise is made that people will be baptised "with" the Holy Spirit, and it is stated that the believers in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Gentiles gathered in the household of Cornelius (Acts 10), had been immersed "in" the Holy Spirit. In all of these passages, the Greek text uses the preposition *en* with the verb *baptizo* to describe the relationship between the Spirit and the believer who has been so baptized. *En*, usually translated "in" or "within," is a relatively simple preposition which literally describes, for example, the relationship between a swimmer and the water of the swimming pool. Used with *baptizo*, it simply means, "completely immersed in," especially when it is contrasted with the instrumental role of water in John's baptism. Baptism with the Holy Spirit, then, is being completely immersed in the Spirit, and this should be "visible" after the event.

This is exactly what was seen in Acts 2 and in the early days of the Church. The believers, as a group, were so completely immersed in the Spirit that other things simply were not important to them anymore. This immersion was symbolized by the wind and the tongues of fire, but was really an event that occurred on the spiritual realm. Because the Holy Spirit is God, He is everywhere, and could not have made Himself any more present around the believers in a physical sense after Pentecost than He was before. But after Pentecost, great and powerful things started to happen through the hands of those people that had been fully immersed in the Spirit. Note, they were spiritually immersed in Him, as viewed from outside themselves.

Perhaps we refuse to give the word "baptism" its full meaning in this context because we prefer an in-church religious "experience" to an on-going relationship that will seriously interfere with our lives if permitted to fully express itself. We want to obey a list of man-made rules and have in-church "experiences" to reassure us that God is on good terms with us so that we can live our lives our own way. Nevertheless, Holy Spirit "baptism" is an on-going immersion in the Spirit of God, not a religious experience that happens in a church service. We must be continually and constantly "being filled" with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).