

Baptism and the Holy Spirit

QUESTION: Some groups teach that you receive the Holy Spirit when you are baptized in water. When does the Bible say a Christian receives the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: You receive the Holy Spirit the moment you accept Jesus as your Savior. According to I John 4:13 & 15, "**whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God**" **has the Spirit of God dwelling in them.** Romans 10:9-10 tells us that "if you CONFESS with your mouth the Lord Jesus and BELIEVE in your HEART that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be SAVED." Ephesians 1:12-13 says that first, you HEARD the WORD of TRUTH, then you TRUSTED in CHRIST (put your faith in Him, received Him as Savior), then AS SOON as you BELIEVED, you were SEALED with the Holy Spirit.

- **I John 4:13 & 15** "By this we know that we ABIDE in Him, and **He in us**, because **He has given us of His SPIRIT.** (Verse 15) "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God ABIDES (DWELLS) in him**, and he in God."
- **Ephesians 1:12-14** "That we who first **trusted in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory. **In Him you also TRUSTED**, after you **heard the word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **HAVING BELIEVED**, you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit** of promise, who is the **guarantee (pledge)** of our inheritance until **the REDEMPTION of the PURCHASED possession**, to the praise of His glory."

Definition: "GUARANTEE" - a down-payment, a deposit, a PROMISE that the full price will be paid. When we accept Christ as Savior, our **spirit** is born again, and the **Holy Spirit comes to live in us** as a **GUARANTEE or promise** until our **BODY** is redeemed and made perfect at the **RESURRECTION** (II Corinthians 1:22, "Who also has **sealed us** and **given us the Spirit** in our **hearts** as a deposit."). See also Eph. 4:30.

- **I John 3:23-24** "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of **His Son Jesus Christ**, and love one another as He gave commandment. Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that **He abides (lives, dwells) in us, by the Spirit** whom He has given us."
- **I Corinthians 6:17 & 19** "But he who is joined to the Lord is **ONE SPIRIT with Him.**" "Or do you not know that your **BODY** is the **TEMPLE** of the **HOLY SPIRIT, who is IN YOU**, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"
- **II Corinthians 6:16** "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **you are the TEMPLE of the living God.** As God has said, 'I will DWELL in them and walk among them, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. '"
- **I Corinthians 3:16** "Do you not know that **you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God DWELLS IN YOU?**"
- **Romans 8:9, 11 & 16** "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the **SPIRIT of GOD dwells in you.** Now if anyone **does NOT have the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is not His** (does not belong to Him)." "But if **the Spirit of Him** who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through **His Spirit who dwells in you.**" "**The SPIRIT HIMSELF** bears witness with our SPIRIT that we are CHILDREN of God."

Definition: "HE IS NOT HIS" - According to Romans 8:9, there is no such thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit living (dwelling) inside of him. **You CANNOT BE a Christian, you CANNOT BE SAVED, and NOT have the Holy Spirit IN YOU**, because it says you are "not His" if you don't have His Spirit in you.

- **Romans 8:15-16** "For you did not receive the **SPIRIT** of bondage again to FEAR, but you received the Spirit of **ADOPTION** by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The **Spirit Himself bears witness with OUR SPIRIT** that we are children of God."
- **Galatians 3:26 & 4:6** "For you are all sons of God **through FAITH in Christ Jesus.**" "And because you are sons, God has sent forth **the Spirit of His Son into your HEARTS**, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"
- **Ephesians 3:16** "That He would grant (give) you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might (power) **through His SPIRIT in the INNER MAN** (your human spirit)."

Definition: "INNER MAN" - Your **human spirit** within you, and also called your **"HEART"** in scripture. The **Holy Spirit of God** comes to **LIVE WITHIN your spirit**, and **YOUR SPIRIT** is "born again" when you receive Jesus as your Savior. Sometimes we call this "asking **Jesus to come into your HEART.**" He comes in and **DWELLS** in you by His Holy Spirit.

- **Ephesians 3:17-19** "That **CHRIST may DWELL in your HEARTS** through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the **love of Christ** which passes knowledge; **that you may be FILLED with all the FULLNESS of God.**"

Definition: "FILLED with the fullness of God" - This is the same as **being FILLED with the Holy Spirit.** "Filled" means "controlled by." In Ephesians 5:18, Paul contrasts **BEING DRUNK** with **BEING FILLED** with the Spirit. **INSTEAD** of being drunk, which is to be "**UNDER THE INFLUENCE**" of alcohol, we are to be **CONTROLLED BY or "UNDER THE INFLUENCE" of the Holy Spirit.** This is **NOT** a **ONE-TIME** experience, but a continuous **YIELDING** of ourselves to the Holy Spirit's control in our lives. The literal translation of the Greek is "keep being **CONTINUALLY FILLED**" with the Spirit.

- **Ephesians 5:17-18** "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but **be FILLED with the SPIRIT.**"

But what about verses in the Bible that say to "ask God for the Holy Spirit" or to "wait for the Holy Spirit"? People get in trouble and come up with all sorts of wrong doctrines because they do not **take scripture in its context!** All of the verses that say to "ask for the Spirit" or "wait for the Spirit" are Jesus talking to His disciples **BEFORE** Pentecost! The Day of Pentecost was when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in **ALL BELIEVERS**, and now it happens automatically when a person is saved. We don't have to wait, and we don't have to ask for the Holy Spirit to come to live in us. The Holy Spirit is actually the One who gives us life and causes us to be born again (in John 3:6 Jesus calls it being "born of the Spirit").

- **Luke 11:13** "If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
- **Acts 1:4** "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (speaking of Pentecost).'"
- **John 14:16-17** "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit), whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for **He dwells with you, and will be IN YOU.**"

Definition: "He dwells WITH you, and will be IN YOU" - Jesus is speaking here to the disciples at the Last Supper, **BEFORE** He has gone to the cross, **BEFORE** His resurrection, and **BEFORE** the Day of Pentecost. At this time, the Holy Spirit was only

WITH the disciples, but after the Day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit would be IN all Believers in Jesus.

- **John 7:38-39** Jesus said, "**He who believes in Me**, as the scripture has said, out of his HEART will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning **the SPIRIT**, whom **those believing in Him WOULD RECEIVE**; for **the Holy Spirit was not yet given**, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Definition: "JESUS was not yet GLORIFIED" - Jesus was speaking about His death and resurrection, which at this point, was yet in the future. **On the Day of Pentecost, AFTER Jesus was "glorified" by His resurrection** and ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit was GIVEN and continues to be given to ALL WHO BELIEVE in Him.

SUMMARY: What is necessary for a person to receive the Holy Spirit? FAITH in JESUS CHRIST! "He who believes in Me" (John 7:38-39); "whoever confesses Jesus is the Son of God" (I John 4:13-15); "having believed in Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:12-14); "through FAITH in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26 & 4:6). **What is necessary for a person to be SAVED? FAITH in JESUS CHRIST!** "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **you will be SAVED.**" (Acts 16:31); "If you CONFESS with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **BELIEVE in your HEART** that God has raised Him from the dead, **you will be SAVED.**" (Romans 10:9-10).

QUESTION: If you don't receive the Holy Spirit at the time you are baptized in water, then what is the significance of water baptism?

ANSWER: Water baptism is SYMBOLIC of what has ALREADY happened to you when you BELIEVED on Jesus Christ for your salvation. You were DEAD in your sins, and you have been RAISED to NEW LIFE in Christ Jesus. **Going down under the water and coming up again is SYMBOLIC of your dying with Christ and being raised with Him.** Our word BAPTIZE comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which means "to be identified with" and also "to be placed into". When you are baptized in water, you are making a PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION with Jesus Christ! You do it in order **to be obedient to God** - He wants you to make that public identification, so that friends and family members will see that you are now identified with Jesus Christ, and a follower of His. In the spiritual realm, you have already been BAPTIZED into the Body of Christ, or "placed into" the Body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit (the Baptism of the Holy Spirit) the moment you believed and were born again.

- **Romans 6:3-5** "Or do you not know that as many of us as were **BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we were **BURIED with Him through baptism** into death, that just as Christ was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in NEWNESS of LIFE. For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His DEATH**, certainly we also shall be in **the likeness of His RESURRECTION.**"
- **Colossians 2:12 & 3:1-3** "**Buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were RAISED with Him through faith in the working of God, who **RAISED Him from the DEAD.**" "If then **you were RAISED with Christ**, seek those things which are above [heavenly things], where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For **you DIED**, and your life is HIDDEN with CHRIST in God."

Definition: "BAPTIZED into His DEATH" - Remember, the word "baptized" means IMMERSSED, PLACED INTO, IDENTIFIED WITH. Because **we have been placed IN CHRIST**, and **CHRIST ALREADY DIED to sin**, then **WE HAVE DIED to sin** - we are also identified with His death. In fact, it is a great mystery, but God's word says we were actually CRUCIFIED with Jesus.

- **Romans 6:6-7** "Knowing that **our OLD MAN was crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be SLAVES of sin. For **he who has died** has been freed from sin."
- **Galatians 2:20** "**I have been CRUCIFIED with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **CHRIST lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
- **Ephesians 2:1 & 4-5** "And you He made alive, who were **dead** in your trespasses and sins." "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when **we were dead** in trespasses (sins), **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved)."
- **John 1:12-13** "But as many as **RECEIVED Him**, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, even to those who believe in His name. **Who were BORN** not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God.**"
- **John 3:5-7** "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **BORN of water and the Spirit**, he **cannot** enter the kingdom of God. That which is **born of the flesh is FLESH**, and that which is **born of the Spirit is SPIRIT**. Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be BORN AGAIN.**'"

Definition: "BORN of WATER and the SPIRIT" - Water is used in scripture to represent the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Jesus is NOT talking about water baptism here, but of God's washing and cleansing us when we are BORN AGAIN. Nicodemus knew what Jesus was referring to - Ezekiel 36:25-27. In Ezekiel 36, God describes the New Birth and the spiritual cleansing that happens when we are born again, and His Spirit comes to live in us.

- **Ezekiel 36:25-27** "Then I will **sprinkle CLEAN WATER on you**, and you will be clean; **I will CLEANSE you** from all your filthiness and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a **new spirit within you**; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes."
- **Titus 3:5** "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy **He SAVED us, through the WASHING of regeneration** (NEW BIRTH) and renewing of the Holy Spirit."
- **Ephesians 5:25-26** "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and **CLEANSE it with the WASHING of WATER by the WORD.**"

All these scriptures are speaking of **SPIRITUAL cleansing**, not of being washed in literal water, or of being baptized in water. Water baptism DOES NOT SAVE YOU or do anything more than GIVE A PUBLIC PROFESSION of your faith in Christ. It is an act of obedience to Him, and **an OUTWARD PICTURE** of what has already happened to you ON THE INSIDE when you believed (the "washing" of regeneration). In Acts 10, we see the Holy Spirit falling upon the Gentiles as Peter preached the gospel and they believed even while they sat in their seats. Then, Peter commands them to be baptized in water.

- **Acts 10:44 & 47-48** "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word." "Can anyone forbid water, that these should be baptized **who HAVE RECEIVED the Holy Spirit** just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

QUESTION: I was baptized at birth...does that count?

ANSWER: Water baptism is **SYMBOLIC of what has ALREADY happened to you** when you BELIEVED on Jesus Christ for your salvation. A person has to be at least old enough to KNOW what they are doing when they believe in Jesus Christ, so **NO, baptizing babies does not count.** The symbolism of baptism shows that you were DEAD in your sins, and you have been

RAISED to NEW LIFE in Christ Jesus. **Going down under the water and coming up again is SYMBOLIC of your dying with Christ and being raised with Him.** Our word BAPTIZE comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which means "to be identified with" and also "to be placed into". When you are baptized in water, you are making a PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION with Jesus Christ! You do it in order **to be obedient to God** - He wants you to make that public identification, so that friends and family members will see that you are now identified with Jesus Christ, and a follower of His. In the spiritual realm, you have already been BAPTIZED into the Body of Christ, or "placed into" the Body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit (the Baptism of the Holy Spirit) the **moment you believed** and were born again. Water baptism DOES NOT SAVE YOU or do anything more than GIVE A PUBLIC PROFESSION of your faith in Christ. It is an act of obedience to Him, and **an OUTWARD PICTURE** of what has **already happened to you ON THE INSIDE** when you believed (the "washing" of regeneration).

- **Romans 6:3-5** "Or do you not know that as many of us as were **BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death? Therefore we were BURIED with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in NEWNESS of LIFE. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His DEATH, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His RESURRECTION."
- **Colossians 2:12 & 3:1-3** "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were RAISED with Him through faith in the working of God, who RAISED Him from the DEAD." "If then you were RAISED with Christ, seek those things which are above [heavenly things], where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you DIED, and your life is HIDDEN with CHRIST in God."
- **Matthew 28:19-20** "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."
- **Acts 2:41** "Then those **who gladly received his word** were BAPTIZED; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."