



# THE DOWNRIVER DISCIPLES PROJECT

explores what the Bible says about

## BAPTISM



*The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

[1 Corinthians 2:14-16](#) (see also [Isaiah 40:13](#))

### ONE BAPTISM, MANY WAYS

If a handful of devout Christian, Jesus following, God fearing, religious denominations were ushered into one room and each were asked for their respective definition of Baptism, there would assuredly be conflicting opinions offered. A new Christian or a non-Christian might see this and be flabbergasted (or offended) at the mere suggestion that there is not a unified Christian approach to Baptism. This must be blasphemy! After all, the good Christian thinks, don't we all adhere to Biblical teachings? If so, what does the Bible say about Baptism?

Before all else, let us establish what the biblical definition of Baptism is. Wait! Which one? The water baptism or the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Hold on! Aren't they one and the same or...are they different? How about infant baptism? Where or how does that fit in with the biblical definition?

Offered herein are Bible based reflections, Baptism-related Bible verses (by book) and some related external links on the topic. Modifications are welcome at [goodnews@downriverdisciples.com](mailto:goodnews@downriverdisciples.com).

### BAPTISM DEFINED

The [Apostle Peter](#) (1) offers what may be the clearest biblical definition recorded:  
"Baptism . . . is the pledge of a clear conscience toward God" ([1 Peter 3:20-22](#)).

### OLD TESTAMENT

In multiple [Old Testament](#) (2) instances, [God](#) (3) speaks of pouring out His Spirit ([Isaiah 44:1-5](#), [Joel 2:28-29](#), [Zechariah 12:10](#)). As we examine some OT books of the [Holy Bible](#) (4), we find [The Law](#) (5) offers insight about the [Twelve Tribes of Israel](#) (6) using water as a form of ceremonial consecration, purification and cleansing ([Exodus 19:10-11](#), [Leviticus 8:6-9](#), [Leviticus 14:8-9](#)). Another OT [covenantal](#) (7) rite with God was male circumcision ([Genesis 17:10, 14](#)).

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## NEW TESTAMENT

The [New Testament](#) (8) opens with the fiery itinerant preacher, [John the Baptist](#) (9), coming onto the scene. The 3 synoptic [Gospels](#) (10) of [Matthew](#) (11), [Mark](#) (12) and [Luke](#) (13) tell us the last of the OT [Prophets](#) (14) was preparing the way ([Isaiah 40:3](#), [Matthew 3:2](#)) for his cousin ([Luke 1:36](#)), [Jesus Christ](#) (15), by preaching a baptism of repentance for the [forgiveness](#) (16) of sins ([Matthew 3:11](#), [Mark 1:4](#), [Luke 3:3](#)). By receiving John's baptism, a person was making a public pledge to turn away from sin while preparing their hearts to receive and [follow](#) (17) the One who was to come ([Acts 19:4](#)).

In [Colossians 3:11](#), the [Apostle Paul](#) (18) makes clear that the new and everlasting covenant through Christ Jesus ([1 Corinthians 11:25](#)) abolishes the former covenant of circumcision. See also [Romans 2:25-29](#), [1 Corinthians 7:19](#), [Galatians 3:1-29](#).

In [1 Corinthians 10:1-2](#), Paul is preaching to the Church at Corinth about their ancestors who were "all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into [Moses](#) (19) in the cloud and in the sea."

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

Two thousand years later, our baptism reflects the same desires, but we identify our actions through the [Crucifixion](#) (20), death and [Resurrection](#) (21) of our Savior. Accordingly, our old self is dead as we set a fresh course as a new creation in Christ Jesus ([Romans 6:1-11](#)). We are, for all intents and purposes, resurrected ourselves as we are infused with the [Holy Spirit](#) (22) ([2 Corinthians 5:17-21](#)).

Our perfect role model, Jesus Christ, was [baptized](#) (23) ([Matthew 3:13-17](#), [Mark 1:9-11](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#), [John 1:29-34](#)). His final command before He ascended into Heaven was for us to baptize and teach ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:16](#)), and this was definitely water baptism ([Acts 8:36-39](#); [Acts 10:46-48](#)). The Bible says there is one baptism ([Ephesians 4:4-6](#)). But the [Word of God](#) (24) also calls us to receive the Holy Spirit in baptism ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#); [Acts 2:38-39](#); [Galatians 3:27](#), [Galatians 4:6](#)).

The Bible tells us that, if we are a Believer in Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit within us ([Romans 8:9](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)). It is incumbent upon us as Christ's Ambassadors to actively tap into that Spirit, unleash it and utilize as He commanded. Otherwise, we're merely waltzing through mechanical "checklist" motions in a lukewarm fashion ([Revelation 3:16](#)), thereby making not joyful noises giving glory to God ([Psalms 100](#)), but unharmonious discord akin to a clanging cymbal ([1 Corinthians 13:1](#)).

## RELATED BIBLE VERSES

[Matthew 21:24-26](#), [Matthew 28:18-20](#), [Mark 10:37-39](#), [Mark 11:29-31](#), [Mark 16:15-16](#), [Luke 3:3, 7, 12](#), [Luke 3:16](#), [Luke 7:28-30](#), [Luke 12:49-51](#), [Luke 20:3-5](#), [John 1:24-26](#), [John 3:5](#), [John 3:23](#), [John 4:1-2](#), [Acts 1:5](#), [Acts 1:21-23](#), [Acts 2:1-47](#), [Acts 8:1-40](#), [Acts 9:17-19](#), [Acts 10:36-38](#), [Acts 10:44-48](#), [Acts 11:15-16](#), [Acts 13:24](#), [Acts 16:1-40](#), [Acts 18:8](#), [Acts 18:24-26](#), [Acts 19:1-6](#), [Acts 22:12-16](#). [Romans 6:1-23](#), [1 Corinthians 1:13-17](#), [1 Corinthians 10:1-2](#), [1 Corinthians 12:1-31](#), [1 Corinthians 15:29](#), [Galatians 3:27](#), [Ephesians 4:4-6](#), [Ephesians 4:20-24](#), [Ephesians 5:25-27](#), [Colossians 2:11-14](#), [Colossians 3:5-11](#), [1 Peter 1:3](#), [1 Peter 3:1-22](#), [Titus 3:3-8](#), [Hebrews 6:1-3](#).

## FOOTNOTES

- (1) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/apostle-peter>
- (2) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/old-testament>
- (3) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/god-of-the-bible>
- (4) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-good-news>
- (5) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-law>
- (6) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/twelve-tribes-of-israel>
- (7) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/covenants>
- (8) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/new-testament>
- (9) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-benchmark-of-greatness>
- (10) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-four-gospels>
- (11) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/matthew>
- (12) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/mark>
- (13) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/luke>
- (14) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/prophets-of-the-bible>
- (15) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/jesus-christ>
- (16) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/forgiveness>
- (17) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/discipleship>
- (18) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/ambassador-in-chains>
- (19) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/moses>
- (20) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/obituary-of-jesus>
- (21) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/resurrection-of-jesus>
- (22) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-holy-spirit>
- (23) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/baptism-of-jesus>
- (24) <https://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-word-of-the-lord>

## RESOURCE LINKS

<https://thebibleproject.com/podcast/i-am-who-i-am-part-10-born-spirit/>  
<https://www.gotquestions.blog/biblical-baptism.html>  
<https://www.gotquestions.org/infant-baptism.html>  
<https://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-1Peter-3-21.html>  
<https://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-of-John.html>

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