



The Voice Of Truth

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"Dry Baptism"

By Shane Carrington

Baptism involving absolutely no water! At least that is the claim. "Dry baptism" supposedly describes the process through which people become Christians. God does teach baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), but does this baptism include no water? Let's examine this waterless (dry) baptism idea; what does the Scripture really teach?

The Claim: Dry Baptism Places Believers into Christ

People portray "dry baptism" as the process the Holy Spirit uses to "place the believer in Christ." In their terminology "dry baptism" equals "Holy Spirit baptism." Notice the following passages and comments from "dry baptism" advocates.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). "... we were all baptized. The Spirit joins all believers to the body of Christ (The Ryrie Study Bible New Testament 305).

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). "... baptized into Christ. Not water baptism but Spirit baptism, which brings believers into a living union with Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13) (Ryrie 336).

For similar comments see Ryrie on Romans 6:3, 4 (Ibid. 271); Unzer's Bible Dictionary 496; and Word Studies In The Greek New Testament, Treasures of The Greek New Testament 3:86-88, by Kenneth Wuest.

Baptism In Jesus' Name: The Truth!

What does the Bible really say about baptism in Jesus' name? "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" (Matt. 28:18-20). People baptize people. The Holy Spirit was not commissioned to baptize people. Note this:

1. Jesus commanded disciples to baptize people "in the name" of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16).
2. But the baptism of the great commission "in the name" of God is water baptism (Acts 10:47, 48).

3. Therefore the baptism Jesus commanded is "water baptism" not Holy Spirit baptism.

Water Baptism in Jesus' Name

More proof? When disciples began carrying out the great commission, what did they do?

Philip "preached Jesus" to the eunuch (Acts 8:35). "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39). You cannot miss the water in this passage!

After teaching Cornelius and his family, Peter said: "'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not 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" (Acts 10:47, 48). They had already received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17). After they received the Holy Spirit, Peter commanded them to be baptized in water! Peter would not "forbid water" (Acts 10:47); he "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). Therefore when disciples "baptized in the name of the Lord" they were baptizing people in water" not the Holy Spirit.

The above passages prove Jesus' disciples practiced water baptism "in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47, 48), not Holy Spirit baptism. Take note:

1. Baptism "in the name of the Lord" is water baptism (Acts 10:47, 48).
2. Baptism in the name of Jesus is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Peter said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).
3. Therefore water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism, is "for the remission of sins."

When people with the right disposition of heart — faith and repentance — are baptized in water, they become Christians. "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Two Baptisms Today?

Most who believe that non-miraculous Holy Spirit baptism "places people into Christ" also believe water baptism plays a part in God's scheme. Sometimes they use the same passage to discuss both water and Holy Spirit baptism (Ryrie Study Bible New Testament 271). However they must choose one or the other. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). We have no more scriptural foundation for two baptisms than for two Gods, Lords, or faiths. In the past, God employed several baptisms. By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, there was only one. What is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5? Water baptism!

Reasons:

1. It was for all people (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
2. It was for all time (Matt. 28:18-20).
3. It is unto salvation (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 22:16).

Reasons Holy Spirit Baptism is Not the "One Baptism"

1. It was miraculous, with evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4, 14-21). Miraculous power in men would not last throughout human history (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Water baptism was a continuing provision (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). Therefore Holy Spirit baptism is not the "one."
2. We possess only two possible recorded occurrences of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5-8 with 2:1-4; 10:44-48 with 11:15-17). God never promised Holy Spirit baptism for all people! Peter appealed to "the beginning" (Pentecost, Acts 2) to find another occurrence (Acts 11:15-17). Holy Spirit baptism happened seldom, while water baptism occurred often (survey the book of Acts).
3. God baptized the apostles with the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and give them power to prove they were preachers from God (Acts 1:5-8; John 16:13; Acts 2:1-43). The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family to convince Peter and the rest of the brethren that God was willing to accept Gentiles (Acts 10:1-18). No passage suggests God made Holy Spirit baptism necessary to salvation! Water baptism places people into Christ (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27)!

What About 1 Corinthians 12:13?

Some think they have strong evidence for "dry baptism" from 1 Corinthians 12:13 (cf., the works cited earlier). They interpret other passages in light of this one: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). But this does not teach Holy Spirit baptism.

Notice several reasons:

1. It says baptized "by" the Spirit, not "in" (in spite of what some translations say). "By" comes from the Greek word, *en*, which has several possible meanings: "in, on, at, with, by, among" (The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon 209). Since multiple possibilities exist, we must determine its meaning by the context. In 1 Corinthians "by (en) the Spirit" means the Holy Spirit is the source: of spiritual cleansing (1 Cor. 6:11), information (1 Cor. 12:3), and power (1 Cor. 12:9). Therefore, "baptized by the Spirit" means the Holy Spirit is our source of information concerning baptism — not the element into which we are baptized! The Holy Spirit is the baptizer here, not the element into which people must be baptized!
2. Only Jesus baptized people in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7, 8; Luke 3:15, 16; John 1:25-34). Yet the Holy Spirit — through the word (Eph. 5:26) — teaches people the baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13. So the Holy Spirit baptizes us in the sense that he revealed God's instructions about baptism.

3. Jesus baptized people in water, yet not personally. "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)" (John 4:1, 2). Jesus taught; others baptized. Similarly, the Holy Spirit teaches us water baptism via the word (John 16:13; Acts 2:38; Eph. 6:17), while humans baptize us in water. No one is scripturally baptized otherwise, for the Holy Spirit revealed the Scriptures! Jesus "made and baptized more disciples than John" (John 4:1, 2) — though not personally. Similarly the Holy Spirit baptizes us — though not personally — in the sense that his word (the gospel) teaches us to be baptized.

Conclusion

Baptism is necessary to salvation — water baptism, that is! Holy Spirit baptism was temporary, ending before the first century closed. Holy Spirit baptism never directly saved anyone! But we must preach and practice water baptism — unto salvation — until the Lord returns. "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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" (Matt. 28:18-20). And this is immersion in water — nothing "dry" about it!

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Ups and Downs

Sam Binkley, Jr.

Most of us have our ups and downs in life. There are certain things that contribute to these emotional feelings. Almost without exception our feelings are up when things are going well with us: the money is there to pay the bills when they become due, our health is generally good, all members of the family are doing what they should to help things run smoothly, and other things which contribute to our well being. On the other hand when things are not going so well we can get down and everyone around us is aware of it. There are natural and normal reactions to these conditions. It would be unthinkable for all of us to be on the upbeat all the time. Neither are we always down and out.

There are things we can do which will help us deal with life's situations in away that will not interfere with our relationship with our Creator. The Christian is admonished to "cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). And "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanks-giving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). These principles applied will help us in life, but then am specific problems to which we must decide just how to apply them. The way we apply them to ourselves will make a difference in the way we feel and the way we react.

Family members can help if all will communicate their feelings, and then show their concern for one another. It takes all parties to make it work. If one has had some experience during the day that was unpleasant or physically painful and the others indicate their sympathy that will lift him up. On the other hand if there is no sympathy shown that just adds to the frustration and depressed feeling.

Prayer to God at the beginning of the day will give us strength and the confidence that things will work out if we put our trust in him. He was able to deliver the three Hebrews out of the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) and Daniel out of the lions' den (Daniel 6). He is also able to help us in time of need.

When things are going well we need to realize that not everyone is experiencing the same feeling at that time. We just might need to observe this and do what we can to help them overcome their difficult time. One of the reasons we do not do this as we ought is that we are so absorbed in our own feelings that we fail to see that others have needs which we can supply. Look at the example of Jesus when he was on the cross. He was concerned about those who were responsible for his crucifixion and prayed that they might be forgiven. He also made provisions for John to take care of Mary (Luke 23:34; John 19:26-27).

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