

SPIRITUAL BAPTISM

By Jack W. Langford

“What??—You don’t believe in water baptism for today?!” the man exclaimed! To which I answered, “No, I don’t.” “Isn’t that sort of strange?” he replied. Yes, it is “sort of strange” that certain Christians today don’t believe in or practice water baptism. However, the only reason it seems strange is because water baptism has been enlarged to become so important an ordinance in typical Christendom that no one expects to hear someone who professes to be a conscientious, Bible believing Christian say he doesn’t practice it.

Actually, in 1967 a high ranking Roman Catholic scholar stated just the opposite. He indicated that in light of his New Testament studies it is actually strange that water baptism is so important in Christianity. He said, “To a certain extent, however, it is unexpected that baptism appears in Christian circles as a baptism in water, for a close reading of the New Testament suggests that there were indications that might have led Christians to reject a baptism in water for a less material baptism which would be understood as a baptism in the Spirit” (Raymond E Brown, S.S., *Opening Remarks, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*, Page 11). Now, the purpose of this particular Bible Study is to prove to you from “a close reading” of the Scriptures that the baptism God ordained for this present Age is Spiritual and not material.

Actually, there have been many Christian groups down through the centuries that have rejected the practice of water baptism on very clear Biblical grounds. In approximately 200 A.D. Tertullian lashed out against those Christians of his day who rejected water baptism (see my paper on “*Tertullian and his Little Fishes*”). Throughout the “Dark Ages” the Paulicians rejected water baptism. Edward Gibbon, in his famous work “*The Decline And Fall of The Roman Empire*” had a whole chapter on the Paulician Christians (he apparently had strong admiration for them), and stated that they were “the first reformers” (see my paper on the “*Paulicians*”). Martin Luther, himself, expressed anger against those Christians of his time who had rejected water baptism. In post-Reformation times the Quakers were well known for rejecting water baptism as a mere continuation of Judaism. And today most of the ultra-dispensational groups do not observe water baptism, being led by the famous scholar E. W. Bullinger of England. Bullinger’s “*Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*” is still in use in certain large seminaries. Indeed, probably the greatest treatise on “*Baptism*” in the English language (in five volumes, over 1800 pages) was done by James W. Dale, whose works, the Baptists charged with virtually returning us to “Quakerism” because of his exposition of key passages as referencing a spiritual baptism.

On the “other side of the coin” so to speak, the highest authority in Christendom’s world gave vivid testimony to the lack of value that water baptism has played in the modern era. Pope Paul VI shocked many of his clerics by a public statement he made in his exhortation “*On Evangelism in The Modern World*, (15), (56).” This was in late 1977. Vatican theologians cringed when this admission was made. However, they meekly acknowledged it “was true,” and “It’s the most startling way to express it,” and such in Christendom are “rightly described.”

“Today there is a very large number of baptized people who for the most part have not formally renounced their baptism, but are entirely indifferent to it and not living in accordance with it” (56) “The church...is the people of God immersed in the world ...has constant need of being evangelized,” (15) (being only) “baptized pagans.”

In contrast to the sickening example of Christendom's celebration of the rite of water baptism as exemplified by the Pope's statement, allow me to quote a few of the passages that tell us that the essence of Biblical Christianity is spiritual realities and not physical rituals—

Christ said, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:23,24).

Again, Christ said, "*It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing; the words which I speak to you are spiritual and are life*" (John 6:63).

The apostle Paul said, "*This only would I learn of you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2,3).*

"*For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*" (Philip. 3:3).

"*For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom. 14:17).

"*Who made us competent servants of a New Covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*" (II Cor. 3:6).

Concerning the inauguration of the Church Christ said, "*For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence*" (Acts 1:5).

"*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit*" (I Cor. 12:13).

The world of Christendom seems blinded to the beauty and simplicity of the revelation of Christ concerning the spirituality that has been designed by God for this Age. The passages above are absolutely meaningless to those whose eyes are darkened by the industrial pollution of religious ritualism.

The Baptism of Confusion

To say that there is confusion in Christendom over the subject of baptism is a gross understatement. The actual condition is nothing less than humorously chaotic. There seem to be endless ways by which the water is to be applied. The most prominent are by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. The candidates either have the water applied to them in some way, or they are placed into the water in some fashion. Some insist on plunging the victim face forward while others lean them backwards. Some insist on doing it at least three times while to most once is enough. The baptisteries vary from bird-bath like fonts, to pouring a cup of water upon the candidate with the excess falling into a pan, to elaborate baptisteries ornamented with flowers and birds and costly materials to make people feel like they are in paradise. Yet other baptisteries are designed with glass panels so that the audience can actually view the candidate placed in "the watery grave." Then there are those whose baptisteries are elaborately heated so as to accommodate the comfort and warmth of those baptized. Yet others insist in being baptized

“just like John did it” outside in rivers, springs, ponds, swimming pools or even the ocean. Not to be outdone, the Mormons created a giant bath born on the shoulders of twelve life-size oxen, all overlaid in gold, patterned after the bath Solomon built for the ancient Temple. Of course this baptistery is for the elect only and is supposed to last for eternity. Then there are those who literally build their churches around the baptistery, or place it as the foremost centerpiece of attraction. Worst of all in the confusion is the purpose for it—the major groups would contend that it is unquestionably for salvation of the soul (even though the soul didn’t get wet). However, these same also indicate that the effect of this salvation is almost surely uncertain due to later circumstances that cancel out the effect—and therefore must be applied a second and third, etc., time. Others conclude it is just an “outward sign of an inward work” (even though with hypocrites it doesn’t prove a thing, except they got wet).

The Baptism of Reality

I am a Christian because I have been baptized inwardly, cleansing my heart and my soul, by the Spirit of God. This alone is the reality and the substance. This baptism which is spiritual is the only one that can make a person a Christian because it is the only one that can get the job done right, and it is the only one that God, Himself, performs, and He never makes a mistake. God never baptizes a hypocrite—only those who are truly repentant believers in Jesus Christ. Ritualists are not satisfied with this baptism to be sure, simply because they cannot see it or perform it themselves. They will scoffingly say, “I never heard of that before!” Well, the purpose of this paper is to tell you all about it, because if you don’t have it, you are not a Christian. As the Pope has said, you may only be a “baptized pagan.” Actually, I like the words of the first Pope, if we were to concede that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope (which we will not do). Peter referred to those false preachers of the last days as nothing more than “washed sows” (II Pet. 2:22) who will return to their “wallowing in the mire.”

Neither is this baptism something new that has never been taught before even in Christendom. From the very beginning of the second and third centuries the so-called “Early Church Fathers” spoke very plainly about it. Origen said, “The baptism of John was seen; the baptism of Christ is invisible.” Augustine said, “Neither has Christ desisted from baptizing: He ever yet practices it, not by the ministry of the body, but by the invisible operation of His power.” Ambrose added, “For the body is purified by water, but the sins of the soul are cleaned by the Spirit.” Justin Martyr added, “For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and lo! The body is pure...Wash therefore, and now be clean, and put away the iniquity from your souls, as God bids you be washed in the laver, and be circumcised with the true circumcision...Nor do we receive the useless baptism of cisterns, for it has nothing to do with the baptism of life.” Hierom later added, “If any man hath only received the bodily washing with water, that is outwardly seen with the eye, he hath not put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Most importantly the Bible talks about this inward spiritual reality and this is the crucial factor that every soul must answer to. Did you notice that Justin Martyr spoke of the “true circumcision” along with the “baptism of the soul”? The best illustration of the inward spiritual baptism of the heart is the subject of circumcision as found in the Bible. So let us begin our study therein, and I pray that you will be a “noble Berian” who searches the Scriptures to see if these things are true (Acts 17:11).

The Inward Spiritual Circumcision of the Heart

The best illustration of the inward spiritual baptism of the heart is to look at the subject of circumcision in the Bible. The well-known outward rite of circumcision was originally commanded by God for Abraham and all his physical descendants. It served as the token of God's covenant blessings promised to them. It was incorporated by Moses into the Law system. This was very important to the Israelitish nation. In the closing years of the Jewish dispensation and the opening years of the Church Age some individuals even went so far as to confuse circumcision with the means of obtaining spiritual salvation. We read about this in Acts 15, verses 1-5. They taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses you cannot be saved." As a result this became a cardinal question of dispute in the early Church. Thank God, that question was very surely settled through the Spirit's guidance.

What was far more important than the ritual of physical circumcision was the fact that Moses and several of the prophets spoke of a real, inward "*circumcision of the heart*" which would place the people in a right spiritual relationship with God. Please read such passages as— Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Lev. 26:41; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:28,29 & Col. 2:11.

Now one could well say, in light of the wording of the above Scriptures, that "circumcision saves"! However, these Scriptures make it very obvious, that the circumcision which saves was NOT that which was outward in the flesh, but that which was inward and spiritual of the heart.

We use the terms, "inward" and "spiritual" and "of the heart" in order to characterize and distinguish it from that which was merely outward and physical in the flesh. As these verses of Scriptures above demonstrate, a person could have the outward physical rite in his flesh, but not have the inward spiritual reality in his heart. And, conversely, a person could have the inward spiritual reality in his heart, but not have the outward physical ritual in his flesh. This is emphasized by the Apostle Paul in Romans 2:26-29. Here Paul describes certain Gentile people who do NOT have the physical rite in their flesh but most certainly demonstrated by their godly lives that they had the inward spiritual reality in their hearts.

The Outward Physical Baptism in the Flesh

Now we shall find that the precisely same principle is true concerning the subject of baptism. Most people are totally unaware of the fact that water baptism existed long before the New Testament was ever written. "Baptism," you see, is merely the Greek translation of the Hebrew words for "washing," "purification," "cleansing" or "bath." See any Greek Lexicon or Dictionary concerning the Hebrew antecedents for "baptism." That is why when John the Baptist came baptizing with water, no one came out and said, "John, what in the world are you doing placing people in the water???" It was a common practice and done every day in Israel. What they did ask John was "what was the *purpose* of his baptism?" or "why are you baptizing?" In Israel there were purifications (baptisms) for just about anything.

The New Testament clearly says that the Old Law Covenant "*consisted of a variety of baptisms*" (Hebrews 9:10, literal translation). It goes on to say, "*which served*" only for ritual "*purification of the flesh*" (Heb. 9:13). The writer of the book of Hebrews also called them "*carnal* (fleshly or physical) *ordinances imposed upon Israel*" (Heb. 9:10). As I said before, back in the Hebrew Scriptures the words are translated for us into the English by words like

“washings,” “cleansings,” “baths” or “purifications.” These outward physical rites of purification literally permeated the everyday life and customs of the people of Israel. Ritual cleansing was already a custom before Moses. Note the family cleansing of Jacob by the oak of Shechem where Jacob rededicated his family to the Lord (Gen. 35:1-4). There was the full national washing at the foot of Mount Sinai before they received the Law (Exo. 19:10). This was in preparation for receiving the Old Covenant. The Law demanded daily purifications for any type of ceremonial uncleanness—see Lev. 15 and Num. 19. The Tabernacle and the Temple rituals were all accented by the priestly immersions of hands, arms and feet in the large laver bath in front of the Holy Place. Even at this very moment archaeologists are still uncovering the numerous ritual baptistries called “*miqva’ot*” in and around the old Temple area in ancient Jerusalem. See—“*Discovering Jerusalem,*” by Nahman Avigad for a vivid and colorful documentation of these. Also in Israel, there has been the question of “Who Is A Jew?” which has been debated back and forth for years. The problem centers around the question of which branch of Judaism should be allowed to perform the ritual baptism (*miqva’ot*) to make one a real convert to Judaism. In addition to the variety of baptisms that the Law demanded, the Pharisees invented “traditional baptisms” for a variety of reasons for the people of Israel. These are referenced in Matt. 23:25; Mark 7:2-5 and Luke 11:37,38. Christ was repulsed by the strong emphasis they placed on the outward rites of “baptism.” He spoke to them very strongly on their need to be “clean on the inside.” This brings us to—

The Inward Baptism of the Heart by the Spirit.

As with the subject of circumcision, the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles also spoke very plainly of the real, inward, spiritual purification, washing, cleansing or baptism of the heart that would, in fact, save them and bring them into a right relationship with God. See and read carefully such passages as—Psalms 51:1-10; Isa. 1:16-18; Jer. 2:22 & 4:14; Matt. 5:8; 23:26; Mark 7:6, & 17-23; Luke 11:39,40; Acts 15:9; James 4:8, etc., etc. Like with circumcision, one could well say from all these Scriptures (and many more) that “baptism saves” and “remits sins!” However, it would be that baptism which was inward and spiritual, of the heart, and not that which was outward in the flesh. Again, we use the terms “inward” and “spiritual and “of the heart” in order to characterize it and distinguish it from that which was merely “outward” and “physical” and in the “flesh.” Though John the Baptist outwardly baptized people (purified them for the approaching Kingdom) yet he also preached “the baptism OF REPENTANCE for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Repentance is an attitude of heart that brings about the “remission of sins” by God’s forgiveness—thus the “washing or baptism of repentance.”

As all these passages indicate, a person could have the outward rite of baptism in his flesh, but not have the inward spiritual reality in his heart. And conversely, as it was with circumcision so it is with baptism. A person can have the inward reality in his heart entirely separate from and/or without the physical ritual in his flesh. Again the Gentiles would be a good example. They were not to have any of the Mosaic Law baptisms per the decision of the Church in Acts 15 (see verses 24-29). Yet they were certainly “purified in heart” for their soul salvation (Acts 15:9,10). The same was true of the large Corinthian assembly (I Cor. 1:14-17). Only a few of the Jewish members were baptized by Paul in water, and yet at the very same time Paul was the evangelist by whom they were all “begotten (spiritually born)” through the gospel—I Cor. 4:15. In addition Paul says that every one of them had been “washed...by the Spirit of God” (I

Cor. 6:11). Consequently, we know all of them had been washed on the inside, but only a few of them (certain Jewish members) had been washed (baptized) on the outside.

This inward washing or baptism of the heart has been described many ways by both Biblical writers and by later theologians as well. The following are some of the more popular expressions that have been used—“inward cleansing,” “washing of the heart,” “real baptism,” “invisible baptism,” “figurative baptism,” “spiritual baptism” and “spiritual cleansing.” Alexander Campbell, the founder of the so-called “Restoration Movement,” and one who vigorously contended for the necessity of water baptism for salvation, nevertheless, acknowledged this inward baptism and called it—“The Inward Baptism” in contrast to “The Outward Baptism” (see, *Millennial harbinger*, 1837, and quoted in the *Disciples of Christ*, page 227). He, likewise, admitted that one could have the “inward” and not the “outward” and yet be saved. Whichever way you may choose to describe it, there it is and there it stays—a fundamental and basic truth from the Scriptures!

Now some people will still say, “Well, I never heard that expression before!” And I would answer them, “An important religious leader by the name of Nicodemus (John 3) was also befuddled by an expression that Christ used and that he had never heard before.” Christ had said to him, “You must be born again.” When Christ saw and heard Nicodemus’s bewilderment and inability to spiritually comprehend this, He pointedly chided him. “Art thou a ruler in Israel, and do not know these things?” Of course if this was *new truth*, then there was no way Nicodemus could have known it. But if this was understandable through the Hebrew Scriptures, then as a teacher and leader Nicodemus should have known about it. Indeed, Christ’s rebuke was warranted. For it is true that a look throughout the Hebrew Scriptures indicates that a spiritual rebirth was obvious in many places in the Old Testament Scriptures—Deut. 32:5,6, 18-20; Psalm 82:6; Isa. 1:2; 63:8, 16; Jer. 3:4, 19; Ezek. 36:25-27; Hos. 1:10 & Mal. 2:10, etc. That the new birth was common to all ages is another factor that destroys the myth that Christ’s words to Nicodemus were the institution of a new water baptismal regeneration. In reality Christ was only stating in fresh clear language what had always been true. He was simply contrasting the physical birth with the need for a new Spiritual birth. There always has been a new birth for repentant believers in God’s mercy. Similarly, there always has been that inward baptism or circumcision of the heart that takes away sins and purifies the soul. Those today who teach that ritual water baptism remits sins are just as blind, and just as much trouble to the Church, as those professing legalists of Acts 15:1-5, who taught that ritual circumcision saves.

As a rule, in looking at verses that say baptism is for remission of sins or spiritual soul salvation, it will NEVER say it was water baptism. And conversely, where water baptism is clearly mentioned it will NEVER say it is for spiritual soul salvation or remission of sins—try and prove me wrong!

SPIRITUAL BAPTISM

When we use the term “Spiritual Baptism” one must remember that this is a “generic” expression. There is a “class” of baptisms that are spiritual in nature. In other words, there are a variety of “spiritual baptisms,” just like—as was pointed out under the Law dispensation—there was a “variety of water baptisms,” so it is with the truth about “spiritual baptism.” Not every spiritual baptism is the same. In other words there are a variety of spiritual washings, cleansings, purifications or baptisms for different purposes. To say that a given baptism or purification is

spiritual does not necessarily tell which specific spiritual baptism this is. This may sound confusing but it really is necessary for clarification purposes. Let me give you some examples—

When the apostle John talks about the hope of being changed into Christ's likeness he uses some symbolic spiritual language—*“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure”* (I John 3:3). If one keeps in mind that “purification” is a synonym for “baptism” this statement will be more meaningful. The Law baptisms were “for the purification of the flesh” (Hebrews 9:10 & 13). John's baptism was for “purification”—John 3:25. When anyone went up to the Temple, to appear as it were in God's presence, he was to be immersed in one of the bapistries around the Temple for “purification” (John 11:55; Acts 21:24 & 24:18). Now in this passage John is saying that the believer who is in anticipation of appearing with Christ will “purify himself, just as He (Christ) is pure.” This cleansing or baptismal purification is obviously not for salvation, but rather for our presentation before Christ in a clean state. The believer will keep himself in a “purified state.”

The same type of language is used in Ephesians 5:26 & 27, where Paul talks about the final presentation of the Church as a bride to her husband. In so doing the Church will be “*sanctified and cleansed*” by “*the washing* (lit. laver-bath as was used in the Temple) *of the water by* (lit. in) *the Word.*” The image here is really beautiful. The “Word” of God is the specified cleansing element (see also John 15:3 & 17:17). Like physical “water” would be the cleansing element in the “laver” of the earthly temple, cleansing a person before entrance into the Sanctuary, so it is, when the Church is presented to Christ in that heavenly Temple it will have been “sanctified and cleansed” in that heavenly “laver” of the precious truths contained in the Word of God. So if one could envision a large open Bible, with a Laver-bath superimposed upon it containing the cleansing truths of the Word of God, he can understand what Paul is inspired to tell us. Christ had said, “Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you,” when He spoke to His disciples just before His death (John 15:3). And so it will be in that ultimate presentation of all His people to Himself. This passage is NOT at all talking about the spiritual soul salvation of individuals here on earth as many have falsely presumed, but rather that final cleansing of God's people in order for presentation to Christ.

We also should say that the figurative use of “baptism” in I Corinthians 10:1,2 qualifies as a “spiritual baptism.” In the remainder of the passage Paul talks about Israel having “spiritual food,” “spiritual drink” and a “spiritual rock” so they started off with a “spiritual baptism.” To begin their journey they “all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Of course none of the Israelites got a single drop of water on them, either from the cloud or from the sea. They were “dry shod” and crossed on “dry ground.” But figuratively they were “baptized into Moses” through the process. Likewise the Church of Jesus Christ was “baptized into Christ,” *without getting a single drop of water*, and we have also eaten of the “spiritual food” and the “spiritual drink” and have stood before that “spiritual Rock.” That is why Paul said, “now these things became our example” (verse 6). It served as a spiritual example for the Church of Jesus Christ.

This should serve to show the spiritual and symbolic use of the idea and truth of baptism. This should not be disconcerting to anyone. After all the Church of Jesus Christ has a “spiritual Rock,” a “spiritual food,” a “spiritual drink,” a spiritual “High Priest,” a spiritual “Sabbath,” a spiritual “sacrifice,” a spiritual “worship,” a spiritual “Kingdom,” a spiritual “circumcision,” a spiritual “house or Temple,” a spiritual “calling,” etc., etc. And in summary, we have “a New

and Living way...our bodies are washed with Pure Water” (Heb. 10:20 & 22)—a “spiritual baptism.” The “pure water” is the “eternal Spirit” of Hebrews 9:14.

The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

We have talked about the inner washing of the heart which is a spiritual baptism that brings the initial salvation and remission of sins. This is strictly for personal spiritual soul salvation and we will talk about it some more later. We have also mentioned other spiritual baptisms which are not for salvation. One was for purification in our life in expectancy of Christ’s soon coming. Another was for the Church’s ultimate cleansing in preparation for presentation to Christ. Now we want to discuss the promised and prophesied “Baptism of the Holy Spirit.” And actually we need to be careful and distinguish two different baptisms that are in this category.

First there is the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” which was promised and prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, promised for the future Kingdom Age when the Messiah will return in great power and reign on earth for a thousand years. The nation of Israel will have been restored and the anti-christ governments of earth will have been destroyed. This is the setting for this promised spiritual baptism. Study the following passages carefully— Ps.104:30 with Isa. 11:6-8; Isa. 32:15-18; 44:1-5; Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:24-30; 39:25-29; Joel 2:28,29; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16 and John 1:31-33. When one reads and studies these passages carefully he can draw up an outline of all that will be involved within this promised baptism of the Holy Spirit. It will include all the following factors—

1. The Holy Spirit will change the very face of the earth so that the wilderness will become fruitful fields.
2. This will also effect a change in the whole animal kingdom. The carnivorous and poisonous will change to harmless docile vegetarians.
3. For many people their spiritual salvation, remission of sins and receiving “new hearts” will coincide simultaneously with this great baptism.
4. Spiritual strength, so as to enable the saved to walk in the statutes of God and to keep His Laws will be given.
5. Multiplied spiritual blessings that include the total rebirth of the Israelitish nation will be given.
6. A variety of miraculous gifts will be given to the people so as to cause them to “see visions, dream dreams and prophesy” will be displayed.
7. This outpouring or baptism of the Holy Spirit will have the effect of gathering “the wheat (the redeemed) into the barns” of that Kingdom Age.

These Scriptures are clear in showing that the great prophesied baptism of the Holy Spirit will virtually initiate and characterize this future Kingdom of Christ on earth. Only those already saved and those being spontaneously saved will be allowed to enter this Kingdom era. For those being saved at the time of the second coming of Christ, this baptism incorporates everything from their salvation to the multiple blessings received.

It must be realized that the offer of this Kingdom under the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the disciples was firmly rejected by that generation of Jewish people and the rulers of the nation. The “King of the Jews” received a “crown of thorns” by the Roman government as well. This was all done within the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23),

so that Christ did die for the sins of all mankind instead. In addition, Christ had said, “the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to another generation” (Matt. 21:43). Thus, this Kingdom and baptism of the Spirit was postponed to a future time.

The Present Baptism of The Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit for this present Age of Grace was not prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. In addition it does not involve any type of restoration to the earth, nor change in the animal kingdom, nor extend great longevity of life, as was true in the promises by the prophets. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that is expressly for this present Age was called “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4,5), and was privately given to the disciples by Jesus Christ, Himself, the night of His betrayal—John 14:15-31; 15:26; 16:7-15; Luke 24:49 & Acts 1:4,5. It was also indicated in Christ’s message during the Feast of Tabernacles—John 7:37-39. When one reads these passages carefully he can make the following deductions concerning this baptism of the Holy Spirit—

1. First of all, the Person of the Holy Spirit will come from the Father in heaven and take up His residence upon the earth in the hearts and lives of believers. (John 14:15,16). This cannot happen until Christ has gone into heaven (John 16:7).
2. The Holy Spirit will be sent by both the Father and the Son (John 14:26 & 15:26), and He will abide with us “forever” (John 14:16).
3. This includes the initial “drink” of salvation, and grows into abundant and joyous Christian living (John 7:37-39).
4. The Holy Spirit will act as a Divine “Helper” or “Comforter” to stand by and strengthen every believer (John 14:16).
5. The Holy Spirit will personally indwell every believer along with the Father and the Son (John 14:17 & 23).
6. The Holy Spirit will not speak of Himself but will glorify Christ to the believer (John 15:26 & 16:14).
7. The Holy Spirit will emphasize Christ’s presence in us (John 14:18,20, 28).
8. The Holy Spirit will teach the disciples and will bring to their remembrance the things of the past (John 14:26).
9. Christ has many more things to say to the disciples. The Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and reveal them to the believers, guide them into all truth, and show them things yet to come (John 16:12-14).
10. The Holy Spirit, probably primarily through the instrumentality of the believer, will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11).

Please keep in mind that all these spiritual benefits come to us by virtue of the “promise of the Father” which Christ gave to the apostles the night of His betrayal. Now Christ will equate these promises with “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 1:4,5. Christ told the disciples 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.’” In addition Christ added, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;**

and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). We can see by these Scriptures that we can add other things that come to us by virtue of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” for this Age. “Power” in ministry is one of them. This means spiritual courage and enthusiasm in witnessing to others about Christ.

A Survey of the Book of Acts and Epistles of Paul

When one takes a survey of the book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul, he can make more deductions concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Here are just a few of them—

11. As was stated above, with the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit the Lord gave “*power*” to the disciples in their proclamation of the Gospel—Acts 1:8.
12. With the baptism of the Holy Spirit the disciples were the immediate recipients of the *miraculous gifts* of the Spirit (Acts 2:4 & I Cor. 12:1-31).
13. The Holy Spirit completely orders and controls the direction and management of the affairs of the Church—see Acts 2:1-4; 4:31; 5:3,9; 6:3,5; 7:51,55; 8:29; 9:31; 10:19 & 44; 11:12; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6,7; 20:28; 21:11, etc.
14. In light of No.13 above, it is no surprise that the apostle Paul is inspired to describe this Age or Dispensation as being “*the Administration*” or “*Ministry of the Holy Spirit*” in II Cor. 3:8,9. In the Authorized King James it is properly translated “*ministration of the Spirit.*” Note that this stands in opposition to the “*ministration of the Law.*”
15. The living principles for godly conduct in life all come under “*The Law of The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 8:2,4-17).
16. This includes the principle of the *daily Intercession* by the Holy Spirit on the behalf of every believer (Rom. 8:26).
17. The whole Church collectively like a great and magnificent temple is the “*Habitation of God by the Spirit*” (Eph. 2:19-22).
18. The immediate and direct presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer is the “*guarantee*” of the glorious resurrection and translation of the body by the Spirit—Romans 8:23.
19. Though many more spiritual realities can be added to this list by virtue of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit we need only summarize it by Eph. 1:3—“*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with **all Spiritual blessings** in the heavenly places in Christ.*”
20. As a result we can understand that there is only “*ONE BAPTISM*” for this Church Age or Dispensation, and that one must be all inclusive—Eph. 4:5.

When one takes a survey of this kind it becomes evident that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a big baptism! In other words, it directly or indirectly involves many areas of spiritual realities. As described in I Corinthians 12:13, it totally incorporates every believer INTO the body of Christ—“*For by (with or in) ONE SPIRIT are we all BAPTISED into ONE BODY...and have all been made to DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT.*”

This last statement, “*all been made to drink into one Spirit,*” takes us right back to the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in John 7:37-39, concerning those who would believe upon Him for salvation—“*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and DRINK...out of his being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe should receive.*” Consequently, Holy Spirit baptism is the singular baptism that encapsulates the totality of our position in Christ Jesus from start to finish.

Historical Beginning

On the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the baptism of the Holy Spirit first took place. It marked the point in time when the person of the Holy Spirit took up His residence upon the earth in the congregation of God’s people. This baptism incorporated the disciples into a new body, “the Church which is Christ’s body” (Eph. 1:22,23 & I Cor. 12:13). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the establishment of the Church and the rule of the Holy Spirit in God’s people for this Age. Consequently, all—who are saved from the time of the birth of the Church until this present moment—must come under the influence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be baptized into the “body of Christ” means to be “baptized into Christ”—see I Cor. 12:12 & 13 and Gal. 3:27. To be “baptized into Christ” means to be “baptized into His death, burial and resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5). To be baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection means to be “baptized into the remission of sins” (Rom. 6:6 & Acts 2:38). Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an incorporating baptism bringing together the various members of Christ, and the spiritual realities that create and bless those members, into one corporate entity “the Church which is Christ’s body.”

The baptism for the remission of sins has been true throughout the ages. Actually, identification with Christ in His substitutionary death, burial and resurrection has also been true for every person saved throughout the ages. However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is new and distinct for this present Church Age. And, in addition, it now incorporates within its perimeters the baptism into Christ and the baptism into the remission of sins. Remember, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is revealed as an “incorporating” baptism. That means it “embodies” believers with Christ and into His body. The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and Biblical Christianity will now be characterized by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit began the Church, and in addition it began this present “Church Age.” The Holy Spirit baptism virtually creates the Church and constitutes the Church’s relationship to Jesus Christ.

Christ did not stop baptizing with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. He constantly does it. Consequently, “Baptized” becomes the common terminology describing the spiritual *mersion* (immersion) of individuals into Christ and His Church throughout the book of Acts time period. It has nothing whatsoever to do with water, but stands in opposition to it from the beginning. It is the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” the same baptism that *began the Church*, and the same baptism that *adds every member to it*—Acts 2:41; 8:12,13; 9:18; 11:16; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8 & 19:5. In addition the expressions used in Acts or Paul’s letters about spiritual washing, cleansing, purification or remission of sins is that spiritual baptism that has been common throughout the ages—Acts 2:38; 3:19; 15:9; 22:16 & I Cor 6:11. Thus the means of personal soul salvation has remained the same throughout the ages, yet now in this Church Dispensation we must understand that it is intimately linked with that greater dynamic baptism of the Holy Spirit. To miss the unique characterization of the Church of Jesus Christ by the baptism of the

Holy Spirit is due to the spiritual blindness of Christendom's leadership and adds to the detriment of the doctrinal confusion that permeates most of modern Christendom.

In addition we should remember that John's water baptism was still practiced through the book of Acts time frame and should not be confused with the spiritual baptisms that characterize the body of Christ or remission of sins. In the Gospels, water baptism was in the foreground and Holy Spirit baptism was in the background as a promise. In the book of Acts, on the other hand, Holy Spirit baptism is in the foreground and water baptism is fading out in the background.

Looking at a Few Examples

No. 1. Peter's command in Acts 2:38 "*Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*" is basically the same command given by the prophets and by Christ Himself. Isaiah called upon Israel to repent of their apostasy and be "*washed*" from their sins (Isa. 1:16-18). Jeremiah mocked Israel's trust in ritual cleansing (2:22) and called upon them to "*wash their hearts*" for salvation (4:14). John the Baptist used his ritual baptismal purification as an object lesson for the real "*baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*" (Mark 1:4). Jesus Christ rejected the traditional "*baptisms of hands, pots and cups*" of the Pharisees and told them they needed to be "*clean (i.e., baptized) on the inside*" (Luke 11:37-40).

However, the apostle Peter now connects this cleansing baptism in a vital way to another baptism—"*and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise (baptism of the Holy Spirit) is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call*" (Acts 2:38,39). Thus the salvation of all converts from this time forward automatically means they are simultaneously baptized by the Holy Spirit. In other words they will receive the very same promised baptism of the Holy Spirit that the 120 received.

And so it was "*those who gladly received His word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them*" (Acts 2:41). This is the baptism that is the "promise of the Father" and which "adds" every member to the body of Christ.

No. 2. These spiritual baptisms are both actually seen in the conversion of the first Gentiles as recorded in Acts 10. Peter preached the gospel of Christ to this household of Gentiles —"*To Him (Christ) give all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins*" (verse 43). This is the common salvation of all the ages. At the very instant they heard this truth they believed it. Then, the very first thing the Jewish disciples realized was the fact that suddenly these Gentiles had been baptized by the Holy Spirit because they saw the miraculous manifestations (Acts 10:44-46). So the first Gentiles to accept the gospel were Holy Spirit baptized.

Later the apostle Peter recounts this event (Acts 15:7-9) and adds this important factor—"*...that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, Who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us (on the Day of Pentecost), and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*" The inward purification of the hearts by faith is that baptism that is common to all ages, whereas the baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique to this age. However, it is evident that during this age the two spiritual baptisms come in one package.

At this early date Peter saw no reason why these Roman believers should not receive John's water baptism as well (Acts 10:47,48). This water baptism was obviously not for their

salvation which had already taken place. It would identify these converts with the Jewish community of believers still anticipating the Messianic Kingdom. Later it is revealed through Paul that the Gentiles do not need any Jewish Law rituals imposed upon them. This is confirmed to us at the counsel in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 15:22-29. By that time it was evident that Israel's long hoped for Kingdom was in abeyance and God was now "calling out Gentiles" (Acts 15:14-20). Of course, "the Law consisted of a variety of baptisms" (Heb. 9:10). These "meats, drinks and baptisms" would not be imposed upon the Gentiles. It is not until the book of Hebrews is written at the close of the Acts period that the Jewish believers are liberated as well.

No. 3. The baptism of the apostle Paul is given twice and can be explained from two perspectives also. In Acts 9:17,18 the historian Luke recounts for us the fact that Ananias was sent to Saul for two reasons—"that you may receive your sight and be *filled with the Holy Spirit*." Ananias laid hands on Saul and he miraculously received his sight back again. Then Saul "arose and was baptized" and/or "filled with the Holy Spirit." This is similar in nature to what happened to the 12 apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Christ had said they would be "baptized by the Holy Spirit." When Pentecost arrived the text says simply that "*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 1:5 & 2:4). Paul as a new convert and an apostle, would receive the same as the twelve, and this would point to Paul's Holy Spirit baptism.

Later when Paul recounts his salvation (Acts 22:16) he emphasizes "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*." This aspect of Paul's baptism is clearly the remission of sins, which is the same principle for all ages. The two descriptions are obviously one event described from two perspectives.

Romans 6:3-6

Determining the nature of this baptism is almost unbelievably simple. Just believe exactly what is said. This is baptism (mersion) into a Person—not into water. In particular, it is first of all immersion "into Christ's death." There was no water on the cross! It was barren of water! Christ was not buried into a "watery tomb" as ritualists will say. Neither is the believer. This baptism is supernatural because this is a three day baptism instantly reckoned to the believer. Christ's death was for three days and three nights. If a ritualist tried to immerse a convert into water for three days and nights he would bring up a dead person for sure. This is our supernatural identification with Christ's crucifixion baptism and burial wherein our adamic sin nature is rendered dead and judged. In turn we receive a new spiritual life in Christ. There is no water in Romans 6 because it is not water baptism. Everything about this passage is spiritual. To "obey from the *heart* that form of *teaching*" (verse 17) has nothing whatsoever to do with obeying with the *flesh* by a plunge into some form of a *baptistery* filled with water.

Galatians 3:26-28

Everything about this passage is spiritual as well. "Children of God by faith" is spiritual. "Having put on Christ" is spiritual. Being "neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female in Christ" is all spiritual. Being "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" is obviously spiritual. The baptism is into a Person, not into water. There is a similarity between this passage and I Corinthians 12:12,13. In both cases the Person of Christ is mentioned. I Corinthians goes on to focus upon the body of Christ in particular. In both cases the Jew and

Gentile, bond and free are mentioned. The I Corinthians passage very plainly says this baptism is by the Spirit of God.

Colossians 2:11,12

Everything in this passage is clearly spiritual. The “circumcision” is spiritual. It is “made without hands.” It is our identification with Christ in His death. Christ’s death was a baptism and the believer is identified with that baptism of Christ on the cross in spiritual reality, not ritual imitation. It takes place “through Faith” not through the flesh. It is faith in “the operation of God,” not confidence in the operation of some preacher.

I Corinthians 12:13

One of the most unbelievable events in discussing the Bible that I ever witnessed was the preacher from the so-called “Church of Christ” who tried to get “W-A-T-E-R baptism” out of I Corinthians 12:13. I really didn’t think any cleric would try it. After all, the passage plainly says “*By one (a) Spirit are (b) we all (c) baptized (d) into one body.*” The Holy “Spirit” (a), is the stated Agent by which the Action is performed. “We” (b) the believer, is the Subject acted upon. Baptism (c) is the stated Action. The stated Element into which the subject is placed is (d) “the one body” (i.e., the church). One might just as well look for a sparkling mountain lake in the middle of the Sahara desert as to think there is water baptism in this passage. Nevertheless, in desperation this organization must invent it.

This preacher and the sect he represents believes that this passage must mean water baptism. Therefore, they read this passage this way—“**For by one Spirit** (this only means by the *authority* of the Spirit, and we certainly don’t believe in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit) **are we all** (this actually only means everybody except the 12 apostles and the other 120 on the day of Pentecost because they didn’t get the New water baptism, and they were all “set” in the church) **baptized** (of course, this automatically means *water* baptism) **into one body** (this is only figurative language because it could not be direct or literal). Of course this theology never gives the passage a chance. The real reason they don’t believe what it says is simply because it destroys their whole theoretical system.

They try to ignore the fact that they themselves admit every time this order of words is used it meant exactly what it says, “*baptism by, with or in the Holy Spirit,*” except this passage here in I Corinthians.

Matt. 3:11 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

Mark 1:8 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

Luke 3:16 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

John 1:33 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

Acts 1:5 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

Acts 11:16 “*baptized en pnumati*” (*baptized by the Spirit*).

I Cor. 12:13 “*baptized en pnumati*” (‘why of course,’ they say, ‘this means water!’).

They also conveniently forget that Paul goes on to say in I Corinthians 12:18, 27 & 28 that all the members of the “body” were “set” in. There was no difference. The way God “set” all the members including the 12 and the 120 was by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The “One Baptism” of Ephesians 4:5

We determine the nature of any given baptism by carefully looking at the immediate context in which it is found. What exactly is the subject speaking of or talking about? Is it talking about how to get remission of sins and salvation? Or is a given passage talking about the unity of God’s people? If so, that is a different subject. Now this had better be the spiritual “logic” we use when we compare Scripture with Scripture and “spiritual things with spiritual” (I Cor. 2:13) if we are going to be taught by the Holy Spirit on this subject.

Actually, I Corinthians 12:13, which we have just studied above, and Ephesians 4:5 have many things in common. **First** of all, *neither passage is talking about how to get saved or to obtain the remission of sins*. That is NOT the subject matter of either passage. **Secondly**, both passages are plainly talking about the unity of God’s people (I Cor. 12:12 & Eph. 4:3). **Thirdly**, both passages talk about “*one body*” (I Cor. 12:12,13 & Eph. 4:4). **Fourthly**, both passages talk about “*one Spirit*” (I Cor. 12:13 & Eph. 4:4). And **fifthly**, both passages talk about the “*baptism*” that is *fitting to these precise factors*. I Corinthians 12:13 tells us precisely that the “baptism by the Holy Spirit” places us in that “One Body.” Ephesians 4 is actually saying the same thing because, of course, the passage is saying the “*One Baptism*” is in keeping with the unifying work of the Holy Spirit—“the Unity of the Spirit.” Since that is the kind of baptism being described, it is obviously the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” because that spiritual baptism was precisely designed for UNIFYING the saints. All five factors fit perfectly!

In addition, keep in mind that there are seven articles that compose this seven-fold unity of the Spirit. Outside of the three articles of the Triune Godhead, each of the articles is UNIQUE to this present Church Dispensation of time. 1.) “*There is One Body.*” This is the Church, “the body of Christ.” It is unique. Prior to Pentecost it did not exist. It may however, include some saints that were saved before the Church began and were added at Pentecost. 2.) “*(There is) One Hope.*” This is the unique hope for this age which is the Rapture of the Church. In past ages the saints did not have this hope. However, the resurrection of the body aspect is similar to the hope of saints in the past. 3.) “*(There is) One Faith.*” This is the faith (truth to be believed) that is unique to this present “Dispensation of the Grace of God.” This faith is not the body of truth that is common to all the ages. No doubt there are elements of truth similar to what the saints of the past believed. 4.) “*(There is) One Baptism.*” In spiritual consistency, this is that spiritual baptism that is UNIQUE to this “Body,” “Hope,” and “Faith.”—the baptism of the Holy Spirit! Certainly this would NOT be that spiritual baptism that is common to all the ages! However, like the other ingredients above, it does contain the same spiritual baptism for the remission of sins that was true in past ages.

As I stated before, Holy Spirit baptism did not stop on the Day of Pentecost. It began at that time. It virtually created the Church of Jesus Christ. In addition it adds every member to the same body. It continues to do so to this very moment. This baptism unifies the body of Christ and all believers within that body. It alone is the Unifying Baptism of Christianity. Within this baptism are all the spiritual blessing we receive in Christ, beginning with our spiritual soul

salvation and continuing by virtue of our being “*sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise* (Holy Spirit Baptism— Acts 1:4,5) *until the day of redemption*”—see Eph. 1:13.

Holy Spirit baptism is an *incorporating* baptism. It not only incorporates all believers into one body, but it also incorporates all spiritual blessings for the nurturing of that body. I believe this is the “spiritual logic” that honors the consistency of these passages of Scripture.

Hebrews 9:9-14

In Hebrews 6:1 & 2 the inspired writer tells the Hebrew believers that they need to move in their spiritual growth beyond the “elementary” and “foundational” teachings, such as “the doctrine of *baptisms*” (literal translation). In chapter nine the writer, himself, will take the Hebrew believers from one of the Jewish Law *baptisms* into the spiritual reality that is fulfilled in Christ. This is a beautiful transition, because those baptisms under the Law were “figures” of “better things.” The writer moves us from the type to the anti-type, from the ritual to the reality and from the shadow to the substance.

In Hebrews 9:9-14 we are told that the ritual system under the Law “could not make him that performed the service perfect in *regard to the conscience*” (verse 9). In other words these were outward rituals that were “symbolic” or only a “figure” of the reality. They did not take away sins of the soul. That Law system “*stood in meats and drinks and various baptisms* (literal translation) *imposed upon them until the time of reformation*” (verse 10). And then in verse 13 we are given one of the baptisms—“*For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purification of the flesh...*” This baptism was the purification spoken of in Numbers 19 (please read that passage). It involved the very important “water of purification.” The procedure was to take a red heifer outside the camp to be burned completely, its body and blood being turned to ashes. Those ashes were to be kept available in different localities. If a person touched a dead body or bones in the field he was considered unclean and in need of ceremonial purification. Some of the ashes of the heifer were then mixed in a container of freshly drawn water from a stream or spring—in the Hebrew it was called, literally, “living water.” Then the water was taken by a priest or ritually “clean” person and “sprinkled” upon the “unclean” person. The effect was the “physical purification” totally (immersion or baptism) of the unclean person. An amazing procedure! What was the meaning of it? The Holy Spirit will tell us here in this passage in Hebrews.

Let us look at the procedure point by point or step by step— 1.) an administrator, a “clean person”; 2.) by the actual cleansing agent of the “ashes” of the blood and body of the heifer; 3.) contained in the vehicle of “living water”; 4.) and by the action of “sprinkling,” effecting a total immersion or baptism; 5.) the subject to be baptized was “unclean” by virtue of contamination by something “dead”; 6.) after the application of the “living water” containing the “ashes of the heifer” the resulted condition was the ceremonial “purification of the flesh.” The person so baptized was constituted clean and able to serve God.

There you have the ritual of the Law. The text in Hebrews says, “*For if the blood...and ashes...sprinkling the unclean sanctified for the purification of the flesh—HOW MUCH MORE shall the blood of Christ...*” (verse 13, 14). If the ritual can accomplish physical purification what does the reality in Christ perform? Therefore, let us now observe the fulfilled purpose of the ritual and what this exactly typified step by step—

The antitype or spiritual reality is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (verses 11-14). 1.) Jesus Christ, Himself, is the “clean person” even as a “High Priest”; 2.) Who will take “His own blood”; 3.) by means of the “eternal Spirit”; 4.) and “cleanse” or baptize; 5.) the person contaminated by “dead works”; 6.) so as to render his “conscience” pure and cleansed in order to “serve the living God.”

There we have the revelation—only the *Holy Spirit* of God can apply the blood of Christ to our inner being so as to purify (baptize) us unto good works. The Holy Spirit is identified as the antitypical “living water” that carries the “Blood” of Christ, and applies it to our soul or “conscience.” There we have the Law ritual and now we have the SPIRITUAL REALITY EXPLAINED FOR US TODAY. So I would ask you, “Have you been so purified by the blood of Christ?”

I have heard certain preachers say “the blood of Christ is in the water,” and they are actually talking about the physical water of another ritual—their baptistery. But when you look in the water of their baptistery you never see the “blood of Christ.” And when you ask them about it, then they explain—“Well, it is spiritual!” Of course, that is what this Bible study is all about—the *baptism* that saves us is spiritual. The only “water” that can possibly apply the “spiritual” blood of Christ to the soul must be “spiritual” as well. The inspired text says the blood of Christ is applied by the “Eternal Spirit” which is the antitypical “LIVING WATER.” Thank God! That settles it! The Law ritual was never typical of some additional ritual invented by men!

When the text later says, “*we have a New and Living way*” (Heb. 10:20) it takes us out of **ritualism** and into the *spiritual reality*. Therefore it says, “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water*” (Heb. 10:22). This is referring back to the truth explained in 9:11-14. “The body of sin” is “done away” in our “baptism into Christ”—Romans 6:6—and by the “Eternal Spirit” applying the blood of Christ—Heb. 9:14. This is the “PURE WATER” of Hebrews 10:22. There is no physically “PURE WATER” on the face of this sin-cursed earth that can ever wash away the “body” of our sins.

It is fitting to close this particular Bible study with the following passage—

“To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”

Revelation 1:5