The Doctrine of *Baptisms*

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All scripture quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise specified.

Keys for other Bible translations used:
NKJV – New King James Version
ESV – English Standard Version
TLB – The Living Bible
BBE – Bible in Basic English
MNT – Montgomery's New Testament
TLB – The Living Bible
AMP – The Amplified Bible
NASB – New American Standard Bible
NIV – New International Version
MSG – The Message Translation
ASV – American Standard Version
RSV – Revised Standard Version
NLT – New Living Translation
YLT – Young's Literal Translation
WEB – World English Bible
ERV – Easy To Read Version

All Greek and Hebrew words and their definitions were picked from the Strongs and/or Thayer Bible Dictionaries.

Contents

INTRODUCTION ***1***

CHAPTER 1: THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS ***5***

Kinds of Baptism 9

CHAPTER 2: WATER BAPTISM ***11***

1. Water Baptism is a Commandment of the Lord Jesus 11

2. Water Baptism Produces Baptismal Salvation 15

3. Water Baptism Saves by Producing the Answer of a Good Conscience toward God 16

What is the Conscience? 17

4. Water Baptism is an Ordinance of the Church 22

5. Water Baptism Judges you as Faithful to the Lord 29

6. Water Baptism is an open declaration of God's Justification .. 31

7. Water Baptism is an Atmosphere for Supernatural encounters and Manifestation of the Power of God 33

CHAPTER 3: THE ACT OF WATER BAPTISM ***41***

Water Baptism Should not be Performed in any other Name 53

CHAPTER 4: THE EFFECT OFJOHN'S WATER BAPTISM ***55***

The Transfer of the Priesthood Ministry 58

What You Hear Is What You See and Experience 74

CHAPTER 5: BAPTISM INTO CHRIST UNTO THE NEWNESS OF LIFE .. 80

Baptised Into One Body 83

Our Experience with Christ is a Divine Participation 86

CHAPTER 6: THE ANTITYPE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA 91

CHAPTER 7: BAPTISM BY JESUS INTO THE HOLY GHOST AND FIRE UNTO POWER 97

Witnesses of Jesus Christ 98

The "Upon-ness" of the Spirit 102

CHAPTER 8: THE INDWELLING SPIRIT 107

CHAPTER 9: THE INFILLING OF THE SPIRIT 111

The Infilling of the Spirit in the Old Testament 114

CHAPTER 10: HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT 120

1.Pray in the Holy Ghost 120

2.Sing and Dance in the Spirit 125

3. Give Thanks Always and Rejoice 127

4. Submit Yourself 130

5. Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly 132

6. Practice Spiritual Breathing Exercises 134

CHAPTER 11: THE BAPTISM INTO FIRE 137

CHAPTER 12: BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD 145

CONCLUSION.....153

INTRODUCTION

A very basic, foundational and yet sensitive matter confronts us in the scriptures today. This is the subject of the doctrine of baptisms. It is palpable even to the passive Bible reader, that this theme makes too many appearances in the Bible to be disregarded. Right in the beginning of the New Testament, in the book of Matthew, baptism is featured as we read of multitudes teeming to the mighty forerunner of Christ, John, to be baptised. Thereafter, it comes up repeatedly in the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles to the churches – in instructions, narratives and exhortations. Furthermore, the writer of the book of Hebrews gives us a broader perspective by highlighting the plurality of baptism – the Doctrine of Baptisms.

> *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1-2).*

It is thus evident that there are more forms of baptism than just water baptism which many are accustomed to. Scripture acknowledges several kinds of baptism such as the baptism into Christ, the Holy Ghost baptism, the baptism of fire and even the baptism for the dead. What do all these mean? Moreover, it is succinct that the doctrine of baptisms is a part of the complete constitution of the foundational principles of Christ. Yet it is saddening that though an elementary subject, it has roused enormous controversies and dissentions in the body of Christ right from the early church epoch to the present church.

Do you know that water baptism was a cause of great debate in the 16th century during the reformative era? After Martin Luther's reformation during which he radically preached "Justification by Faith", there was another offshoot of his Protestant movement which was identified as the Anabaptist Movement. The term "Anabaptist" means "one who baptises again". This was in reference to their practice of baptising converts to Christianity again even if they had already been baptised as infants. They deemed it mandatory for one to make a confession of faith freely before undergoing the Sacrament of

Baptism, hence, they forbade Infant Baptism. The Anabaptists detached themselves from the Magisterial Protestants and the Roman Catholics because they believed the manner in which water baptism was practised by the prevailing church was wrong.

Even now, there are disparate views across churches on the matter of Baptisms. A well-known Charismatic Pastor recently caused a stir in the body of Christ by asserting that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the new birth; a view which stands in conflict with the common teaching passed on from many fathers of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement, that the baptism of the Spirit is the infilling of the Holy Spirit. How true is this? We will find out in this book.

Scripture asserts in Psalms 11:3;

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

If as believers we cannot arrange the matters of our foundation right, then everything else we hold can be put to question. No matter the grandeur and aesthetic features of a building,

its imminent collapse is certain if it is set on a faulty foundation. This is the reason why it is necessary to write another book on Baptism, as foundational as it is. It cannot be considered as a nonessential subject or a matter of comparatively little importance. We have to get it right!

Thus, I prayerfully commend this book to all my children in the faith and believers at large for a setting forth of a proper foundation as intended by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. This volume is a sequel to my book, ***"Episterizo, Confirmational realities of the New Life"***. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen!

CHAPTER 1: THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Every formidable system is built upon set principles and instructions. The church, as a body, is no exception. In Hebrews 6:1-3, we learn of six very important elementary principles upon which the church is built:

> *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. (Hebrews 6:1-3).*

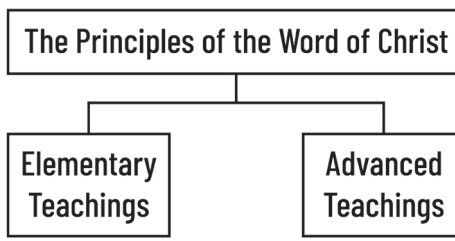
The believer who is void of a perfect understanding of these principles has not yet graduated the elementary school of Christ no matter his natural age or position in the church. I do not intend in this book to delve into all six rudimentary principles save the Doctrine of Baptisms. However, before we proceed to isolate and expound baptism as a subject, I must say that there is a little mishap in the King James

Version translation of the passage above. The Greek word translated as "doctrine of Christ" is *"logos Christos"*. The proper translation ought to be "Therefore leaving the principles of the word *(thought)* of Christ..." The Greek word for doctrine is "didache" which means an instruction or a teaching. Why do I emphasise this? - Of the six elementary principles of Christ enumerated, only the matter of baptisms is said to be a doctrine.

Principally, there is the big umbrella called the ***"Principles of the WORD of Christ"***, under which there are the Advanced Teachings and the Elementary Teachings. The advanced teachings are listed in Hebrews 6:4-6:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Believers who have advanced in their growth in Christ have 1. Been enlightened 2. Tasted of the Heavenly Gift 3. Partaken of the Holy Ghost 4. Tasted of the Good Word of God and 5. Tasted of the Powers of the Age to come. These are the topics treated in the advanced school of Christ.



The doctrine of baptisms is just one of the elementary principles of Christ. It is thus startling that some have been in the faith for decades and yet do not have a perfect understanding of it. Worst still, some have not even been baptised. Since baptism is referred to as a doctrine, we must appreciate that it ought to be taught before one engages in the act or experience. The experience of water baptism, which is just one of the many baptisms mentioned in scripture, will be nothing but a good bath or swim unless the one undergoing it has a clear understanding of its doctrine and

its associated purpose in the life of the believer. The New International Version renders it as the "instruction about baptisms":

> *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, INSTRUCTION ABOUT BAPTISMS, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. (Hebrews 6:1-3, NIV).*

Have you been instructed about baptisms? Do you know and understand all the kinds of baptisms in the word of God and their corresponding purposes in your life? Surely, there is something lacking in your spiritual growth in Christ if your answer to these questions is in the negative. Let this lack create a spiritual yearning in your spirit to have an all-inclusive experience of the blessedness of baptisms in the word of God for you.

In our church; Christ Cosmopolitan Incorporated, we take time off to give our members a perfect understanding of all the kinds of baptism in our baptismal school before

performing the act of dipping them in water. The understanding produced in them before the act makes the experience a meaningful and spiritual one. Whether one has been baptised already in another church or not, is not of great concern to us because we cannot convince ourselves that they were given a perfect understanding of the doctrine before they joined us. It is indisputable that baptismal services in Christ Cosmopolitan Incorporated are heightened moments of spiritual experiences and encounters. We have recorded sudden healings, breakthroughs, ushering into giftings and dedication into the ministry – all in our baptismal services. I have put together the vital keys I have taught in our baptismal school in this book. This is the knowledge that makes the experience of baptisms a landmark and supernatural experience.

Kinds of Baptism

Baptism constitutes a cardinal aspect of the Word of God, both in the Old and New Testaments. Until a man goes through baptisms, he can never experience God's total package of salvation; baptism is indispensable to the holistic salvation of God's creation. Take note that salvation is far

bigger than being saved from hell. It consists of all that God has packaged for a man to enjoy in Christ.

There are various kinds of baptisms in the word of God. Each kind produces a particular effect in the life of the believer and hence must not be downplayed.

It is a common habit, I have realised, among many theologians to immediately confine the discussion to water baptism the moment the word "baptism" is found in a biblical context. Yet it ought not to be so. In perusing the scriptures, you will find these kinds of baptism:

1. Water Baptism
2. Baptism in Christ
3. Baptism in the Cloud and in the Sea
4. Baptism in the Holy Spirit
5. Baptism in Fire
6. Baptism for the Dead

We will discuss them one after the other to know what they mean and the way by which one can experience them.

CHAPTER 2: WATER BAPTISM

One of the saddest and ignorant statements to hear preachers of today make is that "water baptism is a nonessential practice". Do not believe such fallacies, my dear reader. Water baptism is essential to the progress of your new birth! It is not an option; it is a must for every believer. To say water baptism is insignificant is like saying speaking in tongues is inconsequential. You are lacking something in Christ if you have not been baptised in water. Let us find out why.

1. Water Baptism is a Commandment of the Lord Jesus

Do you know that keeping the commandments of Jesus is your way of portraying that you love him? Jesus said in John 14:15, 21,

> *If ye love me, keep my commandments…He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

It is imperative to notice the commandments of Jesus to us and do everything in our capacity to keep them as the demonstration of our love to him. If the last words of a man before his departure from earth are important, then we should take heed to the last words of Jesus which he uttered in the Great Commission before his ascension to the Father.

As part of the Great Commission to go into the world to make disciples of all nations, Jesus unequivocally commanded his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20:

> *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

To "teach" means to make disciples. Thus, other Bible translations render it as "to make disciples of all nations."

> *Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father*

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, AMP).

How could such a matter be deemed as unimportant and optional when Jesus gave us a clear and strict command to do it? He said, *"When you teach all nations, baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit".* Baptism is a cardinal aspect of the work of accomplishing salvation and discipleship of Christ in the heart of a man. This work is incomplete until baptism is seen as an integral part of the work of the Great Commission.

During the ministry of Jesus, he appended his signature of approval to water baptism:

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples) (John 4:1-2).

Numerous believers do not grasp this aspect of Jesus' ministry. Just as John baptised in the Jordan River, Jesus's disciples under his supervision also held sessions of water baptism for their hearers

and converts. It was mandatory for one to be baptised before being called a disciple of Jesus. This practice continued all through the ministry of Jesus until his death and resurrection when he ushered in the new order of water baptism.

Revelation 14:12 and Revelation 22:14 declares;

> ***Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus…Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.***

Before Jesus ascended, he gave us ordinances. Baptism is one of them. Scripture says that blessed are you if you do his commandments, and this gives you right to the tree of life and license to go through the gates of the city of God. There is a certain access you cannot have in heaven if you have not obeyed the ordinance of baptism in water even though you are saved; simply because there is an arrangement it grants your spirit and soul to answer "yes" to God whenever he calls upon you.

2. Water Baptism Produces Baptismal Salvation

The gospel of Mark has an interesting rendition of the Great Commission of Christ to his disciples:

> *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16).*

The one that believes in the gospel message must also be baptised in water to enjoy the full package of salvation. Take note that water baptism does not save your soul from hell, neither does it produce a new creation in Christ. Paul, the Apostle teaches us the way to salvation in his epistle to the Romans:

> *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10).*

You are born again if you have believed in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and have confessed with your mouth that Jesus is

Lord. However, I am sad to announce to you that your salvation experience is incomplete if you have not been baptised in water. The Greek word for salvation, *"soteria"* bespeaks many virtues and privileges. The born-again experience is only the commencement of the believer's journey to the fullness of the package of salvation. The child of God who does not pursue progressive growth will not enjoy every resource that God has in store for him. Baptism as an ordinance has a particular work of salvation that it accomplishes in your life as a believer. This is the salvation of the answer of a good conscience towards God.

3. Water Baptism Saves by Producing the Answer of a Good Conscience toward God

The Apostle, Peter, asserts,

> *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:21).*

Peter reveals an interesting secret about water baptism in the verse above. He asserts that the like figure which is baptism is an antitype, or well said,

a reality of the salvation enjoyed by the eight souls in the days of Noah, who were saved by water.

> *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:20).*

Thus, the eight souls that were saved by water in the days of Noah were the type or shadow of the experience of the antitype or reality of water baptism today. This salvation of water baptism is expressed by or produces the answer of a good conscience towards God.

One becomes a believer in Christ through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, he enjoys baptismal salvation by being baptised in water for the answer of a good conscience towards God.

What is the Conscience?

A man's conscience is the guiding seat and principle of right or wrong, based on the agreement of his spirit and soul under a "final authority". Thus, the object or personality that

has been set as the ultimate authority in your life steers your conscience. For instance, if your father is the final authority in your life, then the guiding rule for all that you do to determine right or wrong will be the law or commandment of your father. If the word of God is the final authority in your life, then it will serve as the canon or rule by which you measure all your actions. In Romans 2:15, Paul said,

> *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*

Speaking of the conscience, Paul defines it as the element that bears witness in men which excuses or accuses them. For every man, there is an arrangement of agreement in his spirit and soul, under an authority figure, that gives him his perception of judgment. Your conscience is said to accuse you when you go against the law of your final authority. Likewise, your conscience excuses or commends you when your actions are in line with the edicts of your final authority.

I am trying to make this as simple as it can be for you, my dear reader – see the conscience as a mirror that gives your reflection. When you look into that mirror and see a defect with your image, then that is your conscience accusing you. When you see a perfect image, then that is your conscience excusing or commending you. However, there are various kinds of mirrors. There are mirrors that will always tell you that you are ugly – that is an "evil conscience".

> *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. (Hebrews 10:22).*

There is another mirror that makes you convince yourself falsely that you are perfect even though you are not – that is a "seared conscience".

> *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.(1 Timothy 4:2).*

Then there is another mirror that makes you see the truth of your perfection through the blood of Jesus – that is a "pure and good conscience".

According to Paul, the faith of Christ is held in a vessel of a pure and good conscience:

> *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9).*

> *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. (1 Timothy 1:19).*

So now, what salvation does water baptism wrought? ***"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*** (1 Peter 3:21). Water baptism, scripture says, saves us by the answer of a good conscience, not toward any other, but toward God. This means, the experience of water baptism positions a man to respond to God as the final authority over his spirit and soul to produce right will. He completely accepts God's description of him and is totally yielded to the demands of God upon his life.

Many believers are going about struggling with God's will for their lives because they have not been

baptised in water. Their consciences have not been mechanically steered to say "yes" to God, and yet some preachers painfully assert that water baptism is dispensable.

The need for a pure conscience cannot be downplayed because it is the vessel that holds the faith of Christ which is our Christian faith, also known as THE FAITH. Many people have side-lined this concerning faith and have become a shipwreck. To be a shipwreck simply means "unable to advance in one's course or journey because one is stuck on the shores of the sea". Thus, many people are unable to advance beyond their new birth experience because they have side-lined the matter that produces the answer of a good conscience towards God. No wonder Jesus made baptism a prerequisite for discipleship.

The matter of water baptism is sometimes taken for granted because many proclaim it as an outward sign of an inward grace through the symbolism of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You would commonly hear such synthetic interpretations in many lessons: *"When you are dipped in the water, it is a signification*

that you died and was buried with Jesus, and when you are brought out, it is a signification that you have been raised from the dead with Jesus." This is false, beloved. At least, it is a just a "common-sense" interpretation hatched from the frail efforts of men cracking their brains. It is therefore not a shock that baptism is not taken important in some churches – if my baptism is just an outward symbolism of a reality that has already taken place within me, then I might as well treat it as optional. Nevertheless, water baptism has a whole different purpose in our walk of faith. There is no place in scripture that advocates the aforementioned interpretation that baptism is an outward symbolism of an inward grace. If baptism is an outward signification of one's death and resurrection with Christ, then what was John's baptism signifying – since, at that time, Jesus had not yet died and resurrected?

4. Water Baptism is an Ordinance of the Church

Beloved, baptism is an ordinance for the church, and thus, must not be broken. In 1 Corinthians 11:1-2, Paul admonishes us to keep the ordinances as was delivered to us:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

We see that water baptism as an ordinance of the early church is evident as a practice of the disciples and the early Apostles.

Knowing how important it was to keep the ordinances, the early church did not hesitate at all to baptise their converts as soon as their hearts were opened to believe the gospel message. Scripture recounts that on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out upon the believers, something remarkable happened. As Peter preached a soul-stirring sermon about the Christ, the people's hearts were moved and enquired of him, what they should do:

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:37-38).

Peter did not just say repent. Rather, he emphasised that after they have repented, there was a sacrament of water baptism which was to follow. If our forerunners and models in Christ took the matter seriously, why should we downplay it? Scripture immediately adds:

> *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41).*

Three thousand souls in one day, or better said, three thousand baptisms in just one day.

Before long, after this event, an evangelist called Philip invaded the city of Samaria with the gospel message. In a spectacular and powerful manner, he presented the message of Christ to the city, and they all believed. Scripture narrates:

> *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (Acts 8:6).*

Yet, once they had believed, consistent with early church pattern of keeping the ordinances, they needed to be baptised in water:

> *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)*

Is it not certain that the message Philip presented included baptism in water? Else, why would they all opt to be baptised right after they believed? Even more precise, the Ethiopian Eunuch evinces the truth that the early preachers decisively taught on water baptism because after he had received clear interpretation of the gospel, he compelled Philip to baptise him:

> *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: AND THE EUNUCH SAID, SEE, HERE IS WATER; WHAT DOTH HINDER ME TO BE BAPTIZED? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 8:35-37).*

How many believers today compel their Pastors to baptise them? Few, because they have not been given the complete gospel of understanding the blessedness of water baptism in addition to the born-again message. Assuredly, by the time you complete reading this book, you will be stirred to yearn for all that God has to offer in baptisms.

Furthermore, in the city of Corinth, when Paul preached Christ, it is reported in the Bible that a man called Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on Christ with his household along with many of the Corinthians. The moment they did, they were baptised:

> *And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. (Acts 18:7-8).*

Even in prison, when Paul converted a jailer, the Bible recounts that the jailer was baptised the same night. He could not even wait for the day to break knowing the benefits he would receive.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. (Acts 16:32-34).

We have journeyed this far to know that Jesus gave an explicit command to make disciples of all nations; requiring water baptism as a part of the discipleship making process. Again, at the inception of the church, three thousand were immediately baptised and added to the church. Moreover, Peter, Paul and other early church evangelists went about preaching the message of Christ and baptising all whose hearts were opened to heed to the message.

Seeing that this is the way of the faith, even Paul, the Apostle couldn't have been exempted during his conversion.

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that

appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. (Acts 9:17-18).

Scripture recounts that Paul arose after his encounter with Ananias and was baptised. From the moment of his baptism, he arose with the answer of a good conscience towards God. He was suddenly transformed from a cynical persecutor of the church to an agent of God to the Gentiles. What a shift!

Seeing this numerous testimony in scripture, can we remain indifferent about the matter of water baptism? The early church wouldn't have gone lengths to perform this spiritual act if it was unimportant. Evidently, the man who treats water baptism as optional is either ignorant or simply disobedient to the ordinances that Jesus left for us as a church.

Now, observe an interesting matter: right after Philip baptised the Eunuch, the Spirit caught him away because his work was done!

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. (Acts 8:39-40).

He was allowed to linger on cruising in the Eunuch's chariot until they chanced upon a water body. Right after the baptism, he was whisked away to another city. Evidently, God views water baptism as essential!

5. Water Baptism Judges you as Faithful to the Lord

In the book of Acts, we read of Lydia's baptismal encounter. By her baptism in water, she declared that the Apostles had judged her faithful:

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house,

and abide there. And she constrained us. (Acts 16:14-15).

Scripture recounts that her heart was opened by the Lord to heed the things Paul shared. The next thing we are told is that she and her household were baptised in water. Surely, the Apostle Paul mentioned water baptism as essential for her complete surrender to the Lord. Yet, she made the most interesting statement that tells us that a man is judged faithful to the Lord when he is baptised. After your baptism in water, be assured in your heart that you have been judged faithful to the Lord by your Pastor.

A couple of comments have been passed concerning the staunch level of commitment of the members of our church. One very powerful ordinance that produces this commitment to the Lord is water baptism. By water baptism, we judge people as faithful to the Lord and the consequential effect is seen in how Lydia went ahead to open her home to host the Apostles. The Lord, by the preaching of the Apostles, opened her heart. However, the baptism resulted in the opening of her home too. Scripture tells us that

she constrained the Apostles to abide with her. This simply tells in the level of her commitment to the course of the kingdom. She was neither coerced nor cajoled to be committed as seen in many churches today in their call for commitment. Something happened to her spiritual life that caused her to become very committed.

6. Water Baptism is an open declaration of God's Justification

The moment we agree to the truth that water baptism is more than an outward symbolism, we are carried into the very spiritual experience of the act or sacrament.

We discover in the scriptures that baptism is an open declaration of Gods justification. Scripture asserts in Luke 7:29-30 that whoever heard John and came to be baptised by him justified God.

> ***And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.***

During Lydia's baptism by Paul, we realised that to be baptised in water is to be judged faithful. However, here in this verse, it is evident that the man that walks into the waters of baptism justifies God! The word of God says that by refusing to be baptised by John, the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The reason being that the denial of John's baptism is the rejection of John's message which was the man Jesus. It is as simple as understanding that the man that does not believe in John does not believe in Jesus. In the days of John, the man who refused to be baptised by him had absolutely refused the saviour Jesus Christ.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? (Matthew 21:24-25).

To be baptised is a prophetic act of heaven. When you offer yourself to be baptised, you

are undertaking a course which is heavenly and from God. The Pharisees doubted this and thus, did not believe in the baptism of John. The man who doubts water baptism is of doubt just as the Pharisees.

When you offer yourself to be baptised, you are making a statement. You are declaring that God is righteous, and this is expressed by the act of water baptism. Harmoniously, Jesus told John to permit them to fulfil all righteousness by baptising him in water.

7. Water Baptism is an Atmosphere for Supernatural encounters and Manifestation of the Power of God

God's excitement about water baptism drives him to manifest powerfully during the act. The consciousness of his presence during baptism ushers one into awesome spiritual encounters. In several incidents in scripture, the manifestation of the power of God was enjoyed by those who heeded the commandments of God by the act of water baptism.

Enjoying spiritual encounters during water baptism is very consistent with scripture. An

event with God's heavenly approval cannot pass without his manifest presence. During the baptism of Jesus, the heavens parted with God's voice of approval of his son during which the Spirit descended upon him in the form a dove.

> *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:21-22).*

Curiously, the Father, hitherto, did not utter his voice until that the singular moment when his son was baptised in water. During water baptism, the portals of heaven are opened for awesome spiritual manifestations. It is a time for men to be released into their mandate, and it is a time for men to be empowered for any trial ahead of them. Interestingly, Matthew 4 verse 1, right after Jesus was baptised, scripture says that he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil:

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

What the devil did not realise was that Jesus had been rightly positioned in his heart to be inclined to the will of God by the act of water baptism, corroborating what Peter revealed in 1 Peter 3:21. Jesus had therefore been sealed through water baptism to always hold the answer of a good conscience toward God. This answer of a good conscience produces the response and propensity to always go the way and the will of God.

Baptism indeed is an atmosphere for miraculous happenings. Consistent with this, it was not a shock when the Spirit translated Philip to another place miraculously during the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. He had begun to walk in the ways of Elijah the prophet.

In another account in the book of Acts, the story takes an interesting twist when Peter was sent to the house of Cornelius to proclaim the gospel to him. The hearts of the Gentiles in Cornelius' house were so opened that Peter did not even complete his discourse when the Holy Ghost fell upon them.

In a spectacular fashion, they all burst out speaking with tongues and magnifying God.

> *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. THEN ANSWERED PETER, CAN ANY MAN FORBID WATER, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? (Acts 10:44-47).*

These gentiles believed in the gospel and were even privileged to speak with tongues before Peter could finish preaching. What more could they need after such a glorious visitation? Yet, Peter, the Apostle with a vivid understanding of the essence of water baptism, said, "can any man forbid water?" Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not an impediment or an over-qualification to water baptism! Beloved, you are not exempted from water baptism even if you have been filled with the Holy Ghost and have spoken with tongues. It is your heritage as a child of God to be baptised in

water. No man can and should forbid you from entering the water of baptism after you get born again. There is a blessing to be attained in water baptism, and you must receive it. Be excited when undertaking such a spiritual exercise. Anytime someone went into the water of purification and was brought out, something supernatural happened. Even in the Old Testament, we see this evinced in 2 Kings 5:10.

In a prophetic act of ritual purification, Naaman, the Syrian captain, was instructed by the prophet, Elisha, to wash in the Jordan River seven times:

> ***And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. (2 Kings 5:10).***

Remember that baptism means immersion or dipping. True to the word of the prophet, Naaman's leprous skin was restored as the skin of a little child after he dipped himself seven times in Jordan.

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2 Kings 5:14).

Actually, water bodies are places earmarked for supernatural experiences. The scripture reveals the wonders at the pool of Bethesda at the stirring of the waters at a particular season. The Bible says emphatically that it did not matter the kind of disease the infirm had. The moment he went into the pool, he came out whole.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. (John 5:4).

In the book of Psalms, the Bible reveals that the voice of the Lord thunders upon the waters.

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. (Psalms 29:3).

There is a divine drawing of water and spiritual occurrences. As a result, at the baptism of Jesus, heaven opened and God's voice of approval came forth, declaring Jesus as the beloved son of the Father in whom he is well pleased.

This understanding must be bedrock in your heart. You cannot walk through the waters of baptism as though it is a usual experience. You must go through the experience while praying. Scripture asserts that during Jesus' water baptism, his mouth was not shut; he went through the waters praying:

> *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that JESUS ALSO BEING BAPTIZED, AND PRAYING, the heaven was opened. (Luke 3:21).*

Water baptism is a prayer session! It is not just about being dipped into the water and coming out. You must be conscious of the presence of God and pray for the experience to be a spiritual encounter for you. Even before the baptism of Jesus, the Jews went through water baptism while confessing their sins.

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, AND WERE BAPTIZED OF HIM IN JORDAN, CONFESSING THEIR SINS. (Matthew 3:5-6).

The moment of water baptism is not a time to shut your mouth. It is a moment of prayer and confessions of faith.

Having understood this, let us discuss the act of water baptism itself.

CHAPTER 3: THE ACT OF WATER BAPTISM

> *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized [baptizo] with the baptism [baptisma] of John. (Luke 7:29).*

The Greek word used for baptism is *"baptisma"*. Its corresponding verb, "to be baptised" is *"baptizo"*. It means to immerse, submerge, to plunge or to make fully overwhelmed. In Hebrews 6:2, the Greek word used for baptisms is *"baptismos"*. It means purifications or washings. The Amplified Bible succinctly says,

> *THEREFORE LET us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ (the Messiah), advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to spiritual maturity. Let us not again be laying the foundation of repentance and abandonment of dead works (dead formalism) and of the faith [by which you turned] to God, With teachings about purifying... Hebrews 6:1-2, AMP).*

Baptism is an act of purifying. The traditional mode of performing the ceremony both in the Old and New Testament is by immersion. There were various baptisms (immersions) under the law. Therefore, every form of baptism which does not have a common theme of dipping or a plunging is not baptism! There are many churches today who would just sprinkle or pour water over the candidate's head and declare him baptised. This does not add up in anyway because even the root word for *"baptizo"*; *"bapto"*, means to dip, and every Greek lexicon has the same meaning for the word *"baptizo"*.

Nothing different could be said of the Encyclopaedias. According to Chambers Encyclopaedia, baptism by sprinkling became prevalent in the 13th century. A dispute regarding the mode of baptism became one of the contradictory differences between the Eastern and Western Churches. The former adhered to the practice of immersion, whilst the latter adopted mere pouring of water on the head, or sprinkling on the face. (Art. Baptism, Vol. I., p. 723). BRITANNICA says that the Council of Ravenna, in 1311, was the first council of the

church which legalized baptism by sprinkling by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister. Nevertheless, in the early church, it was never so!

Indubitably, we see in the scriptures that consistently, much water was a requirement for water baptism because the people needed to be immersed. Scripture recounts in John 3:23;

> *And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*

It does not matter the kind of baptism one is engaged in; there ought to be much of the medium into which one is being baptised. Therefore, water baptism must be carried out where there is much water so one can be immersed or submerged fully.

> *"After his baptism, as JESUS CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him." (Matthew 3:16, NLT).*

The Word of God records that after Jesus was baptised in the Jordan, he came up out of the water. This presupposes that there was enough

water where he was immersed; the water was not sprinkled on him. In another account in Acts 8:27-36, Philip, after having evangelised to the Ethiopian eunuch, found a water body where he baptized the eunuch –

> *"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:36-39).*

There was much water, so they both descended into it for Philip to baptise the eunuch. Philip baptised him by the act of immersion, in fulfilment of the ordinance of baptism Jesus gave to his disciples.

Beloved, you have not been baptised in water if you had water poured on your head! There is no

account in scripture where such a thing occurred during baptism. This must be clearly understood before we proceed into other kinds of baptism.

The spiritual effect and blessing of baptism are highlighted when we understand that in every kind of baptism, there are three major components that are involved:

1. The Agent of baptism
2. The Medium/Agency of baptism
3. The Purpose or Effect of the baptism

In every baptismal experience, one must be able to identify the agent, medium and effect of the baptism. The agent is the one who carries out the baptism; the medium is the substance or element in which one is immersed and ultimately, the purpose or effect is the end result of the baptism. These three components are the foundational and essential blocks of every baptismal experience and definition. Typically, three questions must be answered with regards any kind of baptism. These questions are:

- Who is conducting the baptism? (The Agent)
- In what is the person being baptised?

(The Medium)

- Unto what is the person being baptised? (The Effect)

In considering the case of water baptism, the element into which one is baptised is water. The agent is the one who conducts the baptism by dipping the candidate in water, and the essence, for the believer, is the answer of a good conscience toward God. The other kinds of baptism, which are discussed subsequently, equally follow the same pattern.

In what name is water baptism carried out? Before we proceed, let us first answer this very important question about water baptism. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus instructed his disciples: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. According to Jesus' instruction, we are to be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit but when the believers went about baptising, we saw them do something seemingly different. The word of God says that they baptised in the name of Jesus.

In the house of Cornelius, Peter commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord:

> *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:48).*

In Acts 8:16, the people of Samaria, after believing Philip's message, were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus;

> *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

Even in Peter's public statement on the day of Pentecost, he admonished them to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ;

> *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38).*

Seeing these numerous instances, it is clear that baptism can also be carried out in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as

well as the name of Jesus alone. This is because scripture reveals that Jesus is the embodiment of the Godhead.

> *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 2:9).*

It is very important to read the scriptures carefully when they seem to contradict themselves to you. As a matter of rule, no scripture contradicts the other. Anytime such an instance is found in your studying of the scriptures, you need to ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your understanding to see and grasp the very truth being communicated by God.

A careful scrutiny of the words of Jesus shows that his commandment to his disciples was not for them to baptise in the NAMES of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Furthermore, Jesus did not say that they should baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. To examine what was said precisely, they were instructed to baptise in the NAME OF the Father, AND OF the Son AND OF the Holy Ghost.

To understand this, one must ask three necessary questions in one: "What is the single name that:

1. Answers to what the name of the Father is,
2. Equally answers to what the name of the Son is, and
3. Finally answers to what the name of the Holy Ghost is?"

There is a single name that answers to the Godhead. Before we settle on the name of the Father, we readily know that the name of the Son is Jesus Christ.

> *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)*

John 20:30-31 also tells us that Jesus is the Christ:

> *...But these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Acts 2:36 adds that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

> *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS…BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.*

Thus, it is not a difficult thing to grasp that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. We can expatiate further in the discourse between the angel Gabriel and Mary in the verse below about the name Jesus. From Luke 1:32, 34-35, the angel Gabriel says concerning Jesus that,

> *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest…Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

We see that the child brought forth by Mary is called the Son of the Highest and the Son of God. This child, who is the product of the

"coming upon" of the Holy Ghost on Mary, is vividly called JESUS.

Now, it is necessary to note that Holy Ghost who is the comforter, was sent by the Father in the name of Jesus. Thus, he answers to Jesus' name.

John 14:26 says,

> ***But the Comforter, which is THE HOLY GHOST, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.***

It is the work of the Holy Ghost to testify of Jesus and not speak of Himself. We see this in John 15:26;

> ***But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME.***

John 16:13 also declares;

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: FOR HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

As well, Jesus came in the Father's name and the Father answers to the name of Jesus.

I AM COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. (John 5:43).

Jesus is also called the Everlasting Father in Isaiah 9:6;

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called...THE EVERLASTING FATHER, The Prince of Peace.

Conclusively, Jesus is called the Everlasting Father, He is the Son of God and the Holy Ghost answers to his name. Consequently, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is JESUS. This is why baptism that is carried out in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord is scripturally correct.

Water Baptism Should not be Performed in any other Name

Paul, the Apostle makes it clear that the only name in which one can be baptised is the name of Jesus Christ. No man has the singular honour to baptise his fellow man in his own name or the name of a church. When the church of Corinth became divided, he strictly questioned them whether they were baptised in his name:

> *Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? OR WERE YE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF PAUL? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. (1 Corinthians 1:13-16).*

We are not baptised into any man's name neither are we baptised into the name of a church or creed. If you were baptised into water and told that you are being baptised to be made a member of any church, then no spiritual effect was produced in you, and that baptism was a waste.

This notwithstanding, we must not do away with the spiritual principle that one receives a rub-off of anointing from the agent of baptism. Paul mentions the few individuals and households he baptised in 1 Corinthians 1:13-16. Among these, we see the house of Stephanas.

After they were baptised by Paul, we witness the same fervency and diligence in the ministry life of Paul also begin to work in their lives. 1 Corinthians 16:15-16 says,

> *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.*

Paul, an addict of the ministry, produced a house that was addicted to the ministry by reason of water baptism. There is some spiritual virtue that rubs off on you from the agent of baptism during water baptism.

CHAPTER 4: THE EFFECT OFJOHN'S WATER BAPTISM

After the demise of Judas Iscariot, when the demands for selecting a new apostle were listed, it is realised that the baptism of John forms an essential aspect of the gospel message. The Scripture asserts in Acts 1:21-22;

> *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

Peter iterates that the man suitable to stand with them must have companied with them from the time of John's baptism. This is because John's baptism has a very important purpose at the beginning of the gospel message. Ignorance of the purpose of John's baptism short-circuits a man's believing experience in Christ.

In the ushering in of Jesus' ministry, John came preaching the baptism of repentance in the wilderness.

And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (Luke 3:3-4).

Mt 3:11; I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

As a matter of rule, in John's baptism, John was the baptiser, water was the medium and the result or the effect was repentance for the remission of sins.

The Greek word for repentance is *"metanoia"* which means a change of mind. John's ministry was a cardinal pointer to the new order that was to be ushered in. The people were accustomed to a way of doing things by the pattern of the Old Testament. Before the commencement of Jesus' ministry which was to usher in the New Testament, there was the necessity for a transition ministry, and that

was John's ministry. In his own words, he said concerning himself; *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."* His emphasis as he preached was that there was one coming after him who had the pre-eminence, whose shoe-latchet, he was unworthy to loose:

> *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (John 1:27).*

His baptism in water thus, was unto this purpose, that the people would transform their minds from the pattern of the old to the new. When Jesus testified of John's baptism, he indicated that it was from heaven.

> *And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? (Matthew 21:24-25).*

To be baptised is a prophetic act of heaven. When you offer yourself to be baptised, you are undertaking a course which is heavenly and from God. The Pharisees doubted this and thus, did not believe in the baptism of John. The man who doubts water baptism is of doubt just as the Pharisees. Scripture asserts in Luke 7:29-30 that whoever heard John and came to be baptised by him justified God.

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Harmoniously, Jesus told John to permit them to fulfil all righteousness by baptising him.

The Transfer of the Priesthood Ministry

Before the commencement of the ministry of John, the priests were allowed to continue with their temple services unabated. However, the moment John appeared on the scene, preaching the baptism of repentance, there was a spiritual shift. While the priests were in the temple performing empty and vain traditions, the word of God came to John in the wilderness.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (Luke 3:1-3).

In mentioning these names, the writer, Luke, inspects the political and religious leadership of the day from the remotest to those in close proximity. Their presence and influence notwithstanding, God cared nothing for their positions and sidestepped them to use the humble John the Baptist in the wilderness. They were performing the traditions exactly as their fathers had but God was not with them. God had "migrated" from the temple to the wilderness to abide with the man girded with camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, eating locusts and wild honey: the man called the demon-possessed, among the Jews.

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. (Luke 7:33).

To the western mind and common Bible reader, John is just an ordinary man who was chosen by God to be a forerunner of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, digging deeper into his roots reveal that not only was he righteous and courageous; he was also the last of the authentic lineage of the Aaronic priesthood; the only man who was fit to fulfil that which was prophesied by Isaiah, the prophet.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. (Isaiah 40:3-5).

Have you ever wondered why John was chosen to fulfil this important work? It is remarkable to find that John is not a random selection of God

to fulfil this prophecy but rather the specific man foretold by the prophecy. The word of God asserts that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. The words you read in the Bible were carefully chosen; they are not accidental, and our current discourse portrays this truth.

Luke gives astounding details about the parents of John in Luke 1:5;

> *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. (Luke 1:5).*

We learn that the father of John is Zechariah, who served in the course of Abijah. This simply means that Zechariah was not just a Levite but a priest from the descent of Aaron. In 1 Chronicles 24, scripture gives a vivid description of the arrangement of the twenty-four courses of the priests; sons of Aaron, according to the distribution of David, the king.

> *Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu,*

Eleazar, and Ithamar…And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service…The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah. (1 Chronicles 24:1, 3, 10).

Zechariah, the father of John, was of the eighth course which was to Abijah. It is detailed again by Luke that Elisabeth, the mother of John, was also a descendant of Aaron: *"…and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth."* This makes John the Baptist a perfect Aaronic priest.

Notice that in his days, it was found that two high priests were ministering at the same time: *"…Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests…"* This was the kind of corruption that had set into the religious system handed over to them by their fathers. The politics of Rome had by far determined what they were to do. Nonetheless, despite this degeneracy that had consumed the religious and political order of that time, there remained one genuine person who was of the true lineage of the Aaronic priesthood and that was John!

In that critical hour of a spiritual revolution, the priesthood ministry shifted from the arranged physical system of the day and found John, who ministered in the spirit of Elijah, the Prophet. Scripture says of him:

> *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6).*

This is exactly what John came to do. Therefore, we find an amalgamation of the priesthood and prophetic ministry in John, by his natural lineage and spiritual conferment. By this grace, there was no man better than him to stand as God's spokesperson to prepare the people for the emergence of the Messiah, Jesus. Truly, he was the greatest of all men born of women:

> *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11).*

John carried out his ministry for some few months and was beheaded. A ministry so short-lived and yet so powerful and far-reaching. He lifted up his voice in the wilderness without a microphone and sophisticated gadgets, yet as the travellers heard him, they were drawn to him; they could not ignore him! His convicting tone drew them to be baptised by him unto a change of mind and heart to be ready for the coming revolution.

As the sole personality wielding the priestly-prophetic ministry, there came a time when John had to hand over this ministry to Jesus. There was the need for a transition of the priesthood from the Aaronic order to the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. This timely and much -anticipated event took place at the baptism of Jesus. John had already been divinely informed that on the day when this transfer would take place, he would see the Spirit descending and abiding upon the man chosen. He said,

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And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit

descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (John 1:33).

Do you know that the gospel message of Jesus without the essential ingredient of his baptism in water by John makes the gospel message imperfect? The work of righteousness in the ministry of Jesus began with John's water baptism.

One day, as John stood in the River Jordan baptising the multitude and preaching the imminence of the kingdom of God, there walked a man unto him demanding baptism at his hand. As he lifted his eyes and beheld the man, he knew without a shadow of doubt that this was the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. He knew all too well that right before him was the fountainhead of life; the source of creation, who had abased himself in human flesh for the purpose of death. How could he bring himself to dip the One of whom he had prophesied that he was unworthy to lose his shoe latchet; one who did not have need of repentance? In an unpretentious and hesitant tone, Jesus said to John to allow the fulfilment of all righteousness:

...I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: FOR THUS IT BECOMETH US TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS. Then he suffered him. (Matthew 3:14).

Jesus revealed that by submitting himself to be baptised by John, the demand of righteousness would be fulfilled. Which righteousness was he talking about and how was it to be fulfilled?

During the baptism of Jesus, very timely events and prophecies were fulfilled. Before we delve into them, let us appreciate that during every priestly ordination, there was the need for a ritual purification by baptism. Thus, we see Moses washing Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8:6-7 before their priestly ordination.

And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith.

The proper means by which this ritual was performed was by dipping the priests in water in the *"mikveh"* which is a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism. The Hebrew word for "washed" in Leviticus 8:6 is *"rachats"*. Its implication is not to sprinkle or pour but rather to wash by immersion. Traditionally, the *"mikveh"* was used for all purposes of ritual purification such as: by Jewish women to attain cleansing after their menstruation and childbirth and by Jewish men for purity after ejaculation. It was also used for the purpose of baptism for proselytes.

At the baptism of Jesus, it was a priestly ordination service. This time around, not after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchizedek. The priesthood was at once transferred from John (Aaronic) to Jesus (Melchizedek) who served as our faithful high priest and made reconciliation for our sins.

> ***Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17).***

At this moment, the priestly-prophetic ministry was transferred and conferred upon Jesus who was already of a lineage of Kings; Judah. Hence, Jesus operated in the ministry of a prophet, priest and king. Yet, this was just one of the spiritual events that occurred.

Furthermore, John affirmed Jesus as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

> *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).*

In the Old Testament, when a priest, ruler or the common people sinned, it was mandatory for them to lay their hands on the sin offering before it was slaughtered and its blood offered to the Lord.

> *And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. AND HE SHALL LAY HIS HAND UPON THE HEAD OF THE SIN OFFERING, AND SLAY IT FOR A SIN OFFERING in the place where they kill the burnt offering. (Leviticus 4:32-33).*

This was done to appoint the bullock, kid or lamb for judgment and sacrifice instead of the sinner. When John baptised Jesus, he, by his priestly authority, appointed Jesus as the Lamb of God to bear the sin of the world.

This was also in fulfilment of the *"L'adonai"* known as the Lord's goat in Leviticus Chapter Sixteen. In that chapter, we are taught on the principle of the two goats presented before the Lord known as *L'adonai* and *Azazel*; the Lord's goat and the scapegoat respectively. Aaron, the priest, was to cast lots upon the two goats.

> ***And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. (Leviticus 16:8-9).***

The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, was to be offered as a sin offering to the Lord but for the other goat, the story was entirely different. Jesus fulfilled the demand of the *"L'adonai"* as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. But concerning the *"Azazel"*, scripture recounts,

And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:20-22).

Both hands were laid on the scapegoat and the iniquities of the children of Israel were confessed over it. It was then sent to the wilderness, an uninhabitable land, by the hand of an appointed man.

He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins — and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a

solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert. (Leviticus 16:21, NIV).

This "unfortunate" goat was released in the desert to endure its harsh conditions and to face an uncertain end. Now, scripture says concerning Jesus right after his baptism:

And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. (Mark 1:12-13).

He was driven by the Holy Ghost; who is the "appointed man" that led Jesus into the wilderness as the scapegoat. There, he faced the wild beasts of the desert and the devil himself. Without a Hebrew background of this story, one will not readily see that Jesus was fulfilling several prophecies in a single string of events as the new high priest, Lamb of God and scapegoat.

This is the righteousness Jesus spoke of for which he had to be baptised by John. He said, *"... for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness..."* Until this righteousness was fulfilled Jesus was

not allowed by the Father to accomplish any work of salvation.

We have seen three things that occurred during Jesus' baptism in water:

1. There was the transference of the priesthood ministry from the Aaronic priesthood to the Melchizedek priesthood.
2. Jesus was appointed as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world
3. Jesus became the scapegoat that was left to wander in the wilderness

The moment these took place, the work of John was done! His ministry had to dwindle for Jesus' to blossom in the limelight. The masses began to troop to Jesus instead of John for baptism. When this was reported to John, his humble answer was:

> ***He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30).***

Can you believe that two of John's disciples actually left him and followed Jesus?

And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. (John 1:36-37).

John knew and accepted that he had not come to start a system that was to remain forever. Only if men of God will understand their place in ministry like this, we wouldn't have issues in the faith. John was not proud; he accepted that his time was over. He had done all that was required of him and another was to take over.

Beloved, there are many preachers moving about who have lost the touch of God's grace upon their lives. They have nothing relevant to say any longer. They represent vestiges of once gracious works which are now nothing but dead monuments. In the prime of John's ministry, he was the prophet in town. Even Jesus had to submit to be baptised by him. Yet when Jesus took the stage, John stepped back and gave him the honour he deserved. In the work of the ministry, we grow from grace to grace. When you meet a man far advanced than you, acknowledge his place and pray that God should increase you as he has increased that man.

Jesus' baptism was not a baptism of repentance as John's. It was a baptism to make disciples unto himself as he led them to the cross, from whence we have the next kind of baptism; the baptism into Christ.

What You Hear Is What You See and Experience

There is no man on earth who can believe beyond what they have heard or what they have been exposed to. In the kingdom of God, what you hear is your access point to enjoying all the blessings meant for you. Romans 10:17 asserts;

> *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Your faith is surely based on what you have heard and believed. A church that does not expose her members to the teaching of health and prosperity will have sickly and poor members because one's course in life is defined by what he/she has heard. The psalmist thus declares,

> *AS WE HAVE HEARD, SO HAVE WE SEEN in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. (Psalms 48:8).*

The reality your ears are shut to is the reality you will never see! Knowing this, one ought to be concerned about the church in which they fellowship week after week and the kind of messages that are preached there.

This principle is very applicable to the doctrine of baptisms. The experience you have had in baptism is as far as you have heard preached. If you were told that baptism is just an outward sign of an inward grace, then the experience, to you, will be nothing but a representation. However, if you are exposed to the knowledge of all the blessings that God has intended in baptism, then you will have them manifest in your life.

This is the exact situation that Acts 19:1-5 recounts;

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?

And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Paul enquired from these disciples if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. He was startled to find out that they had not even heard that the Holy Spirit had been released for the church. All they knew was the baptism of John which was unto repentance. Sadly, there are many wonderful experiences which occur in the body of Christ today that only a few people enjoy. Wonderful graces and virtues are released but only a few relish them because the masses walk in ignorance. These disciples in Ephesus had been dipped in water but had not experienced Christ because they had not heard the word of Christ.

It is not enough to be dipped in water, my dear reader. What were you taught before you were baptised? If you were baptised for the purpose of becoming a member of your church, then that is as far as you will be blessed. Yes, you have been

baptised but it will not produce the requisite spiritual effect in you because you were not taught the right doctrine. Do not waste your time getting people or yourself immersed in water until the proper teaching of the doctrine of baptisms has been carried out.

Interestingly, in Acts Chapter Eighteen, a Jewish man named Apollos, who was said to be very mighty in the scriptures, also knew and preached just the baptism of John;

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. (Acts 18:24-25).

The word of God says that Aquila and Priscilla took him aside and expounded the way of God more perfectly unto him.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded

unto him the way of God more perfectly. (Acts 18:26).

Perhaps, you have heard certain messages preached on baptism and have even been baptised by immersion but the question you must ask yourself is; *"was the way of God expounded to me perfectly? Is there something lacking in my faith?"*

Apparently, Apollos had done a good job preaching the baptism of John all across Ephesus. Certainly, the disciples Paul found in Ephesus had been instructed by Apollos about the baptism of John. Paul, the Apostle updated these disciples as he emphasised a very significant truth: John's baptism of repentance was unto the purpose that they would believe on him who was to come; on Christ Jesus. This should be noted because, in every baptismal experience, two things must be present: 1. You ought to be baptised unto a purpose. 2. Baptism is a preparation for and a pointer to the next move of God in the age. Whenever you are baptised, you are made to partake of the privileges of the agent of baptism. Additionally, you are positioned to expect the next move of God. For instance, in John's

baptism, his candidates were assimilated into his privilege of seeing the Messiah when he showed up. Their hearts were already prepared to receive the Christ. Thus, those who had been baptised by John did not struggle at all believing in Jesus. Coherently, the same men who refused John's baptism rejected the ministry of Jesus.

As John carried out his baptism, he pointed to Christ, however, he also revealed that when Jesus appears, he would not only baptise with water, but with the Holy Spirit as well.

> ***I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matthew 3:11).***

As we build the tiers, we realise that one level of baptism leads to the other. The baptism of John leads to Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus leads to the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads to the powers of the ages to come.

CHAPTER 5: BAPTISM INTO CHRIST UNTO THE NEWNESS OF LIFE

Baptism into Christ is the same as the born-again experience. Paul, the Apostle makes reference to this in Romans 6:3-4;

> *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

So much is being said here, my dear reader. This scripture has been interpreted by many as the water baptism experience. Yet, it speaks of a different kind of baptism which is baptism into Christ.

By the framework of baptism, we know that there is the *Agent, Medium* and *Effect* of every kind of baptism. Now, this pattern applies in the new-birth baptismal experience known as the baptism into Christ. Here, the Holy Spirit is the agent of baptism, Jesus Christ is the medium of baptism

and the purpose is unto the Newness of life.

- Agent – Holy Spirit
- Medium – Jesus Christ
- Effect - Newness of Life

This immersion is such a lovely spiritual experience. In the ages past, the patriarchs longed for it but were only shown glimpses of it in visions. In Romans 6:3-4, Paul tells us all about it. We appreciate that it is an experience of death and resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." This is the primary occurrence that ushers a man into the new birth. To be baptised into Christ is to be planted into his death to enjoy resurrection with him.

> ***For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Romans 6:5).***

The process of resurrection is instantaneous and yet progressive. We have been raised from the dead with Christ according to Paul, in Ephesians 2:6;

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Yet we are still undergoing the process of resurrection. We comprehend this by the truth that Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Undisputedly, the glory of the Father is the Holy Spirit; the same agent by which we undergo resurrection in Christ. Romans 8:11 declares;

But if the Spirit of him that raised up JESUS from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Take note of the technicalities in this verse of scripture: the Spirit raised "Jesus" from the dead, and he is the same agent that raised up "Christ" from the dead. The moment you hear the name "Christ", do not think of Jesus alone. Christ is one body and yet, has many members. Jesus is the head and the church is the body.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one

body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ…Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27).

The Holy Spirit did not only quicken Jesus; he also quickened the entire body to a new life. Accordingly, we are informed that our mortal bodies shall be quickened unto immortality.

Remember that every baptismal experience prepares one for what is to come. Baptism in Christ which is the new birth plants one in the body of Christ and makes him drink into the Holy Spirit.

Baptised Into One Body

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13;

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 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 been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Scripture succinctly asserts that our baptism in Christ was by the agency of the Holy Spirit. *"For by one Spirit, we are all baptised into one body."* In the new birth, a man is baptised into the body of Christ which is a many-membered body, and made to drink into the Holy Spirit. One drinks into or partakes in the agent of baptism and puts on the medium of baptism. The moment we are submerged into the medium called Christ, we become part of the body of Christ. In this light, Galatians 3:27 says,

> ***For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

Christ is your identification and natural estate in the new birth because you have put him on as a garment. The Greek word for "put on" is *"enduo"* which means to sink into a garment or to invest with clothing. Beloved, this means that Christ is your investiture in this walk of life. This is the reality by which you should be identified; you are Christ!

Moreover, as believers, we were made to partake in the Spirit at our new birth. It is by this

light that we receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in us when we get born again.

> *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).*

Through John's water baptism, Jesus was made to drink into the priesthood ministry as well as the sins of the world. Likewise, the man that is baptised by the Spirit into Christ drinks into the Spirit. *"...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* To drink something means you are partaking in that thing and it enters you to become a part of you. Accordingly, Paul enquired from the disciples in Ephesus,

> *He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. (Acts 19:2).*

The new birth experience includes the reception of the Holy Spirit.

Our Experience with Christ is a Divine Participation

Our experience in Christ is not a divine exchange but a divine participation because we see ourselves united with him right from the cross to the ascension. Therefore, Paul said,

> *I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20).*

Likewise, when he was raised from the dead, we were raised up together with him.

> *Even when we were dead in sins, HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:5-6).*

Before Jesus came, we were already dead in sins according to Ephesians 2:1:

> *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*

By the death of the cross, we were united with him and were planted in the likeness of his death. Historically, it is known that one principal form of Roman punishment was crucifixion. There were several forms by which this execution was carried out. The cruellest form of this penalty was carried out by binding a dead body to a living body and crucifying them together. Thus, while one was yet alive on the cross, the dead body began to rot into the living person's body and the worms of the dead body began to eat into the living body. This was the gruesome occurrence during the crucifixion of Christ. We who were dead and rotting with worms were tied to Jesus on the cross and our death ate into him. This was physically signified by the crucifixion of the two thieves with him on the cross. Our being united with him in death though was to our advantage.

He did not leave us in the grave during his triumphant resurrection; we were quickened together with him, and this is a baptism.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from

the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:12-14).

Baptism into Christ simply means immersion into Christ. What happens when a cloth is immersed in a dye? It gets soaked and takes on the colour of the dye. The same thing happens to us in our new birth. In fact, Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 6:17;

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Baptism in Christ is to be joined in divine participation with the Lord. The consequence of this is to emerge with the Lord in resurrection as one spirit. We read in 2 Corinthians 3:17;

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty

The resurrected Lord is a quickening spirit who leads the church; his body, through the same path

to emerge as quickening spirits in the resurrection that is to come.

> *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45).*

Having said all these, we can now make the statement that the new birth is the same as the BAPTISM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT into Christ or the BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT into Christ. This stands in contradiction to what is preached in many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, where it is taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the infilling of the Spirit that gets a man to speak with tongues. Scripture is not vague about these technicalities. There is the baptism IN the Spirit and the baptism BY the Spirit; these are not the same at all.

The Holy Ghost plays a very instrumental role in our born-again experience since he is the agent by which we are baptised into Christ. However, to be baptised IN the Holy Spirit is a different experience altogether. Let us look at the baptism called the washing of regeneration then we will

proceed to discuss what the baptism in the Holy Spirit means.

By baptism in Christ, there is a divine working in your spirit that produces a new man in you. This is what is referred to as the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER 6: THE ANTITYPE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA

Typology is the study of types. Types are a branch of Christian theology that interprets figures and events in the Old Testament as a foreshadowing of the New Testament. It helps to correlate Old Testament shadows to their greater realities in the New Testament.

Conversely, when the greater reality is now being correlated to its shadow in the Old Testament, then that is said to be the Antitype. An Antitype, therefore, is the reality of the shadow, whereas the Type is the shadow of the greater reality.

The baptism in the cloud and in the sea is a shadow of a greater reality. In explaining this, Paul, the Apostle was determined to bring this truth to the understanding of the brethren.

> ***Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (1 Corinthians 10:1).***

Paul, the Apostle drew several analogies of types with their antitypes in scripture. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, he speaks of an important subject matter which he certainly declared that he did not want the believers to be ignorant of; *"...I would not that ye should be ignorant..."* This is the baptism in the cloud and in the sea, unto Moses.

In this baptism in the cloud and in the sea, we are enlightened about the antitype of the baptism into Christ by the Holy Spirit and water baptism. The experience of baptism is so essential that everyone delivered from Egyptian slavery had to be baptised in the cloud and in the sea unto Moses. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 we read:

> ***...that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea***

Paul, the Apostle says *"that all our fathers were baptised unto Moses"*, firstly in the cloud and secondarily in the sea. Typically, the cloud

here speaks of Christ and the sea speaks of water baptism. It was the cloud that gave light to the children of Israel and created darkness on the side of the army of the Egyptians.

> *....And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. (Exodus 14:18-20).*

The distinction of light and darkness, for the Israelites and Egyptians respectively speaks of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. This portrays how the believer is separated from the world at new birth.

However, there was an important experience that the children of Israel needed to have, by avenue of baptism in the sea. The tyranny to keep Israel in servitude plus the ambition to stop them from going to worship God persisted until they went through the waters of the Red Sea. Whereas

Israel got baptized in the sea, the Egyptians on trying that feat were drowned. Pharaoh's grip and memory on Israel were long forgotten the moment Israel went through the sea.

> *And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. (Exodus 14:13).*

In our walk of faith, this represents a very important occurrence for us because it is a type of our experience of baptismal salvation.

When one, through the new birth, is delivered from the slavery of Egypt which is the bondage of sin, his salvation is not complete till he goes through the sea of water baptism. The pursuit of the world, to make that new believer return to the world he came from, continues until he experiences baptismal salvation.

Take note that, it was through the cloud and the sea, that they were baptised unto Moses. Thus, in this baptism, Moses is the essence or effect. They

were baptised to put on Moses; to be brought into the experience of Moses and take on his reality. Remember that Moses had a forty year experience in the wilderness after he fled from Egypt for fear of Pharaoh. The baptism in the sea ushered the Israelites into the forty year experience of Moses in the wilderness. No wonder subsequently, they were governed by the Law of Moses.

Till you go through the sea, your total mental liberation from the hold of sin and the world is not accomplished. Sure enough, water baptism furnishes one's salvation in the area of the answer of a good conscience toward God. Therefore, we see that right after the sea, the Israelites were ushered into Mount Sinai to receive the Torah; the word of God.

And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people:

for all the earth is mine: …And all the people answered together, and said, ALL THAT THE LORD HATH SPOKEN WE WILL DO. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. (Exodus 19:3-5, 8).

After their baptism in the sea, it is exciting to notice the answer the nation of Israel gave towards their receiving of the Torah from God. They all proclaimed with one heart that they were ready to perform all that God had commanded them. This was because their conscience had been tuned in obedience to give the appropriate answer to God as a result of the baptism in the sea.

CHAPTER 7: BAPTISM BY JESUS INTO THE HOLY GHOST AND FIRE UNTO POWER

Absolutely, the Holy Spirit plays an important role in our new birth as the personality that baptises us into Christ. However, this occurrence is only the beginning of the work of the Spirit in a believer's life. Furthermore, there is another unique kind of baptismal experience for the believer known as the baptism into the Holy Spirit and Fire, carried out by Jesus Christ. John the Baptist explains this phenomenon in Matthew 3:11:

> ***I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Ghost, and with fire.***

John proclaimed that Jesus would baptise not with water but with the Holy Ghost and Fire. Now, take note that the Greek word, *"en"*, translated as "with" ought to be "in". Correspondingly, Jesus baptises IN the Holy Ghost and IN Fire. Baptism in the Holy Ghost means you are completely

submerged in or enveloped by the Spirit. Over here, Jesus is the agent of this baptism, whereas the Spirit is the medium of the baptism. The effect of this baptism is Power. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said,

> *BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

This baptism typically equips the believer to become a witness unto Jesus.

Witnesses of Jesus Christ

The Greek word for "witnesses" is *"martus"*. Apart from meaning one who bears witness in a lawsuit, it also means a proof of the manifestation of the strength of another. Thus, one becomes a proof of Jesus Christ in this world by showing proof of Him in mighty power, signs and wonders. Additionally, the word *"martus"* means a martyr. The baptism in the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ emboldens the believer with power to testify of the word of Christ and also to completely give up his will even if it means death! The moment you are baptised in the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ,

you are signed up as a martyr of Jesus Christ. Many claim to have been baptised into the Spirit and yet are not witnesses of Jesus Christ. They shudder in the face of persecution and affliction and shut their mouths from proclaiming God's message because they fear it will cost them their lives and ministry.

However, the experience of the early church, when they were baptised in the Holy Ghost, was entirely different from what we usually see today. Suddenly, they were transformed from timid and frightful men who had shut themselves indoors to brands that had been plucked out of fire. They stepped out with the fire of the Spirit proclaiming the gospel to the same Jews they once feared to preach to. What changed? They had been baptised in the Holy Ghost and had received power to become witnesses of Jesus Christ. At this stage, death was not a bother to them, and yes: church history proves that they were indeed persecuted and martyred on a large scale. Yet this was not enough to deter them.

One observational sign of the early church when they had this baptismal experience was the

speaking in other tongues. They had been brought into the communion of the language of the Spirit.

It must be noted that speaking in tongues is not the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; it is only an observational sign.

> *WHEREFORE TONGUES ARE FOR A SIGN, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22).*

Tongues-speaking, as a sign, is a means to an end. This end is the ultimate purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit which is POWER. Jude, the Apostle who had this experience on the day of Pentecost admonished believers in Jude 1:20;

> *But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit (AMP)*

Pathetically, many believers, based on erroneous teachings of tongues-speaking, as the evidence

of the baptism in the Holy Ghost, remain at the level of the observational sign and ignore the advancement and progress toward the showing of the evident manifestation of power.

Today, in the church at large, what has been made of the baptism in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. Yet, this is only an observational sign of this kind of baptism. The purpose of the baptism in the Spirit is to receive power to be a witness of Jesus Christ. The primary work of a witness is to speak forth the message of Christ, which is subsequently confirmed with signs and wonders.

> ***Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3).***

The expression of your baptism in the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ is short-circuited if all you have done with it is speaking in tongues. That is not all that God intends for you to enjoy. In the Bible, there were awesome spiritual experiences when men were baptised in the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ. Why is it that today, we only allow people to mumble a few

words and claim the evidence of their having been baptised in the Spirit? Then, these same individuals walk away without any sign of power to be witnesses of Jesus Christ for the rest of their Christian lives.

The "Upon-ness" of the Spirit

The "upon-ness" of the Spirit is a very common occurrence in the Bible. In numerous instances, the Spirit came upon men for the purpose of accomplishing God's desires. The rendition, "upon", could easily sway the mind to believe that it is an external phenomenon in which the Spirit comes from heaven to sit on one's head or to hover on a person. Yet, the "uponness" of the Spirit is actually an occurrence that begins from within as a result of the baptism into the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ. Scripture says in Luke 24:49;

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

In Acts 1:8, it can be seen again,

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and

in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Juxtaposing these verses, we can readily see that the latter is a continuation of the former. First, Jesus promises them that he would send the Spirit upon them, and instructed them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. The means by which they were going to receive power was by the Spirit coming upon them. The consequence of this was that they would become the witnesses of Jesus to all nations.

The word "upon" is the Greek word, *"epi"*. Primarily, it means to superimpose or to reach an apex. Remember that the Spirit dwells in you by reason of your new birth. However, when he comes upon you, he rises from within you to superimpose himself on you reaching the apex of your being. The word *"epi"* does not relate to coming from heaven necessarily. It means the "highest point". The Spirit is said to have come upon you when He rises from within you to completely overshadow you and carries you the highest point of your manifestation in the spirit.

The Greek rendition for "endued" is *"enduo"* which means to sink into a garment or to invest with clothing. To be endued with power is the same as being clothed with power from on high. It means every part of a person is vested from the very top to the bottom. This was the experience of Mary as the holy seed of Christ was planted in her womb. The angel, Gabriel, said to her,

> ***...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35).***

The overshadowing of the power of the Highest is rendered as *"episkiazo"* in the Greek. In Strong's concordance, it means to cast a shade upon, or to envelop in a haze of brilliancy; figuratively, to invest with preternatural influence. The *"episkiazo"* is the highest form of the "uponness" of the Spirit. In this experience, your entire estate comes under the influence of the Spirit as he engulfs you and overshadows you.

Definitely, the endowment of power is not a passive action. Jesus said, *"But ye shall receive*

power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "Lambano" is the Greek word for receive here. It means to actively take power. When one is baptised into the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ, such a person must actively take power and not just speak in tongues.

"Epi" again means to have charge of. Thus, it means the Holy Spirit takes charge over you and it is your responsibility to take power by actively receiving that power. No marvel the psalmist was instructed to open his mouth wide to be filled.

> ***I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. (Psalms 81:10)***

The extent to which he was going to be filled depended on how wide he opened his mouth. Likewise, the extent of power you receive and express depends on how actively you open up to receive and walk in that power.

Moreover, *"epi"* means "throughout as much as". Therefore, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, he takes charge of you as much as you allow him.

Hitherto, we have realised that having the Spirit of God living inside you is not enough. There is much more you can receive by taking advantage of the Spirit within you if you are born again. There is a difference between the "indwelling", "infilling" and "uponness" of the Spirit. These terms can be very confusing for a lot of genuine students of the word. Yet, they all describe relevant aspects of the Spirit's work in a believer's life.

CHAPTER 8: THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

Truly, the vastness of the work of the Spirit in a believer's life is infinite and unending. The Holy Spirit is present from the new birth all through to the believer's glorification. In fact, He is the person that prepares the church, through the five-fold ministry, to become a bride without spot, blemish or wrinkle unto her husband. Before Jesus went to the cross, he said to his disciples,

> *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17).*

Whilst Jesus was with his disciples on earth, he was their tutor and comforter. But the moment he exited the earth, there was the need for another to fill his place and carry on with his work on a large scale. It is for this reason that the Spirit became the agent of the Father to guide and tutor

the children of God into their inheritance. Jesus declared to his disciples that the Spirit was with them and would dwell in them. *"...for he dwelleth with you, AND SHALL BE IN YOU."*

The very first thing that happens to a man when he is baptised into Christ by the Holy Spirit is that he receives the indwelling Spirit by drinking into the Holy Ghost. In John 4:14, Jesus said,

> *But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him SHALL BE IN HIM a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

> *Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" 39 (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.) John 7:38-40, NLT*

The water that Jesus gives is the Holy Spirit. First, a man receives him as a well of water within,

and then this well, when stirred, becomes a spring of living water.

Before one can be baptised into the Spirit, or before the Spirit can come upon a person, that one must first have the spirit resident within him. The very first work Jesus accomplished in his disciples after his resurrection was to breathe the indwelling spirit upon them. While they had shut themselves in for fear of the Jews, scripture asserts that Jesus appeared to them and breathed on them:

> *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. (John 20:22).*

We, therefore, see that after Jesus' resurrection, when he breathed on his disciples, they received the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This refers to the Holy Ghost coming to live in us and bearing witness with us that we are the children of God.

> *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16).*

In the book of John, Jesus bears witness that his body is the temple of God.

> *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." (John 2:19, 21-22).*

We see here from this scripture that after Jesus resurrected, he had raised a new temple. His resurrected body was a new temple. The Bible again tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. This lends credence to the fact that the Holy Spirit is resident in us.

And what agreement does a temple of God have with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (2 Corinthians 6:16). However, the residency of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is very different from the infilling of the spirit, though the latter is a continuity of the former.

CHAPTER 9: THE INFILLING OF THE SPIRIT

In John 4:14, we have seen that the water that Jesus gives first dwells in a man as a well. This is the resident Spirit. However, in John 7:38-39, Jesus takes this reality to the next level when he said, He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, *"Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (But He spoke this about the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)

A believer first receives the Spirit as a well of water within him. From this stage, the Holy Spirit flows out of a man's spirit, soul and body as rivers of living water. The outflow of the Spirit is called the infilling of the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to have the Spirit rise within you to take absolute control of your being; spirit, soul and body. Seeing this, there are various levels of the infilling of the Spirit. Some believers are fully filled, some are partially filled and some only have the Holy Spirit "lying dormant" in them. In fact, there are believers who have been born again for decades and have not so much as enjoyed

the infilling of the Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:18-19, Paul, the Apostle said,

> *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*

The Greek rendition of the phrase, "be filled" is not in the past tense but in the present perfect continuous tense. The International Standard Version says,

> *Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but KEEP ON BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. (ISV)*

Thus, Paul's assertion was that believers should be continually filled with the Spirit. It is not a onetime process that occurs never to occur again. You must always stir your spirit to remain constantly filled with the Spirit.

It is interesting that Paul contrasts the infilling of the Spirit with alcohol intake. He says, *"do not be*

drunk with wine, rather, be filled." Being filled with the Spirit has a remarkable association with being drunk. One can only be drunk if he takes in large amounts of alcohol. To be drunk, Solomon says that one has to tarry long at the wine.

> *Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. (Proverbs 23:29-30).*

A drunkard is under the influence of that which has intoxicated him; he lashes out at everyone, he cries, curses and staggers around. He has no shyness, reservations or reverence for any one's personality. He loses his sense and only does what the alcohol drives him to do. Likewise, when a man is filled with the Spirit, his senses are taken over by the Spirit. His speech, sight, taste, thoughts, hearing and touch all come under the influence of the Spirit.

Men, both in the Old and New Testaments were able to accomplish awesome feats because they were filled with the Spirit. It may come as a shock to some that there are men in the Old Testament era who were filled with the Spirit of

God, just as we are filled with the Spirit today. They had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and thus, he could fill them and even come upon them to accomplish great works. There is the assertion in the body of Christ that the Holy Spirit never dwelt within any man in the Old Testament but he only came upon them. This, by the scrutiny of the word of truth, is not consistent. We find many in the Old Testament who had the Holy Spirit within them.

The Infilling of the Spirit in the Old Testament

As said already, I have heard many preachers assert that the Holy Spirit did not reside in any person in the Old Testament era. Superficially, this sounds reasonable since the first time we see a record of the disciples of Jesus filled with the Spirit was on the Day of Pentecost. However, that assertion is not true. In the New Testament epoch, every believer has the opportunity to be filled with the Spirit. Conversely, in the Old Testament, only a select few had that opportunity. Men who had been anointed into the offices of the prophet, priest and king had the opportunity to be filled with the Spirit. Moreover, men who had been chosen for special works of God were also filled with the

Spirit to empower them to carry out their task. The Apostle, Peter clearly tells us in 1 Peter 1:10-11 that the prophets of old had the spirit of Christ dwelling in them, and it is by the inspiration of this Spirit that they testified of the Christ that was to come;

> *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WHICH WAS IN THEM did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

This indwelling Spirit enabled them to prophesy of great things that were to come.

Prophecy is just one of the things they could accomplish by the Spirit. Scripture recounts in Exodus 31:2-4 that the man called Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God and thus, could devise all manner of cunning works.

> *See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God,*

in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass.

Bezaleel expressed great wisdom because he was filled with the Spirit of God. Before the death and the resurrection of Jesus, it was prophesied concerning John the Baptist that he would be filled with the Spirit even from his mother's womb;

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15).

In the gospel of Luke, we read of a divine interaction that took place between Jesus and John while they were yet in their mothers' wombs. Scripture recounts that the moment Elisabeth heard Mary's salutation, John leaped in her womb because he sensed the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb. Consequently, Elisabeth was immediately filled with the Spirit and began to prophesy:

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her

womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (Luke 1:41-42).

The moment Elisabeth was filled, John, who was in her womb was also filled with the Holy Ghost. After the delivery of John, the word of God says again that his father was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, (Luke 1:67).

All these occurred before the death and resurrection of Jesus. The notion that folks could not be filled with the Spirit in the Old Testament should be quickly erased from your mind.

The difference we stand to enjoy in the New Testament is that the Spirit is not meant to dwell in or come upon a select few individuals. However, the Spirit's intent is to be poured out on all flesh in these last days.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT UPON

ALL FLESH: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (Acts 2:17-18).

Jesus made an emphatic statement in John 14:17 that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

In corroborating this truth, Peter, the Apostle declared that the promise of the Spirit is for the believers and their children, and as many as the Lord will call.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:39).

Jesus referred to the infilling of the Spirit as wine which required a new wineskin. He said,

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. (Luke 5:37-38).

The body of believers is a new wineskin that can carry the freshness of the Spirit in this church age. It should be noted that in Chemistry, new wine could be poured in old wineskin on condition that the old wineskin has been beaten and tempered in hot water to change its ductility and tensility to renew it into a new wine skin. This is the pressure that the Old Testament appointed officers had to go through to receive the Spirit. However, for us as believers, it was made simple with the onset of the new creation in Christ. Hence, we without going through any pressure, are a new wineskin. Our spirit man, therefore, is renewed in Christ to receive the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 10: HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Scripture shows us various ways by which one can be filled with the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18-20, Paul mentions certain vital practices that get one full of the Holy Ghost: And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. To many in the church, the only means they know by which they can be filled with the Spirit is by speaking in tongues. Yet, there are several other means by which we can stir ourselves to be filled with the Spirit:

1.Pray in the Holy Ghost

Scripture says in Jude 1:20;

> *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,*

To pray in the Holy Ghost is bigger than speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is a part of the bigger concept of praying in the Holy Ghost. Every believer lives in the Spirit according to Romans 8:9;

> ***But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you...***

The scripture is clear on the fact that to be in the Spirit is nothing enigmatic and out of the average believer's range. To be in the Spirit simply means to have the Spirit in you. The Bible further says in Romans 8:14 that,

> ***As many as are led by the Spirit they are the sons of God.***

Our sonship is hinged on the Holy Spirit within who leads us in life. Hence, to pray in the Holy Ghost is to be led by the Holy Ghost in prayer. Any believer can pray in the Holy Ghost as long as he is conscious that he is in the Spirit, that is, he has the indwelling Spirit of God and is led by him. We are commanded in Ephesians 6:18 to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Any prayer that is not done in the Spirit, no matter what form it takes, is not God-ordained or approved and should be avoided. Such prayers do not avail much in the spirit; they cannot bear fruits. Your prayer must be led by the Holy Ghost based on the word of God otherwise, it becomes sickly or unproductive and will not yield any results.

Thus, generally, all prayer and supplication must be made in the Spirit. Prayer and supplication in the spirit fall under two main categories or forms: praying with your spirit and praying with your understanding. Hence, to pray in the Holy Ghost/Spirit is to pray the will of God either by praying with your understanding or praying with your spirit or even both.

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Praying with your spirit is different from praying with your understanding. When the Spirit leads you to pray, he can employ praying with your spirit or you, knowing his will, can pray it out in your understanding. Paul, the Apostle said in 1 Corinthians 14:14;

> *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

The one who speaks in tongues or prays in an unknown tongue prays with his spirit! He does not pray with his mind. The Bible in Basic English expresses it most appropriately:

> *For if I make use of tongues in my prayers, my spirit makes the prayer, but not my mind." (1 Corinthians 14:14, BBE).*

Therefore, there is praying with your spirit which is speaking in an unknown tongue and praying with your understanding which is praying from your mind and all of these fall under the broad range of praying in the Holy Ghost. However, to pray with your spirit or to speak in tongues has a far-reaching effect or is more "advantageous" than

praying only with your mind. This is evident in chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians which says,

> *For if you give a blessing with the spirit, how will the man who has no knowledge say, so be it, after your prayer, seeing that he has not taken in what you are saying? For your giving of the blessing is certainly WELL DONE, but of no profit to the man without knowledge." (1 Corinthians 14:16-17, BBE).*

To speak in tongues is to pray well according to the verse above.

In the entire Bible, we realise that the moment any person was filled with the Spirit, he either began to prophesy or to speak in tongues or accomplish a great work. On the day of Pentecost, scripture recounts,

> *And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4).*

Scripture says again in Acts 4:31 that after the disciples had prayed, they were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with boldness.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31).

There are many benefits one can achieve by praying in the Spirit. I have enumerated this in the book, ***"Episterizo, Confirmational Realities in the New Life"***. Get a copy and read for a better understanding.

2.Sing and Dance in the Spirit

In Ephesians 5:18-19, Paul mentions that to be filled with the Spirit, we have to speak to ourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and make melody in our hearts to the Lord. *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."* As much as you can pray with your spirit, you can also sing with your Spirit. Paul, the Apostle said,

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Singing with your spirit simply means singing in tongues. When was the last time you alone held a prayer session singing with your spirit throughout? This is a very powerful practice you must not neglect.

Paul and Silas, employing this secret, caused the foundations of an entire prison to shake and all its doors got unbolted.

> ***And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. (Acts 16:25-26).***

Praying, singing and dancing in praises to God is a very powerful weapon in the spirit that you can employ to cause changes in your environment. When you are bound, sing; the chains will break. When you are sorrowful, sing praises to God; the sorrow will lift! As you sing, your spirit will be lifted above every drudgery you find yourself in.

One time in the ministry of Jesus, he and his disciples became very sorrowful because of the

cup that was before Jesus. In such a time, scripture asserts that they sang a hymn.

> *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. (Mark 14:26).*

Additionally, when you are merry, James admonishes us to sing;

> *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. (James 5:13).*

Make tunes out of the psalms and sing them. There's such a fresh anointing power that is released as we engage the singing of the psalms. Beloved, singing spiritual songs will always uplift your spirit at all times. Never neglect it!

3. Give Thanks Always and Rejoice

> *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"*

Thanksgiving is a divine secret that causes great manifestations in the lives of believers. To be filled with the Spirit always, you have to have

a life of constant thanksgiving unto God. When you wake up in the morning, the very first thing that should proceed out of your mouth to God is thanksgiving. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, Paul teaches us the means to keep the spirit within you burning aflame.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.

In the faith of Christ, we do not rejoice only because good things happen. Even in adversities and challenges, we are taught to rejoice. The Apostles, Peter and John could not do less; after they were threatened by the rulers and elders of Israel, they did not go back like whipped dogs with their tails in between their feet. The word of God says that they lifted up their voices and praised God!

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God,

which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is…And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:23-24, 31).

Right after they had prayed and praised, scripture says that the place where they were was shaken. How do you shake your environment? It is by rejoicing. These Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness even after they had been threatened. In Acts 5:41, they actually rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus:

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Thanksgiving should be your lifestyle as one who endeavours to be constantly filled with the Spirit. Accordingly, we see the Apostles giving thanks to God for the church, as part of their way of always praying for them.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, (Colossians 1:3).

4. Submit Yourself

Submission is another way to be filled with the Spirit. *"...Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God..."* The person who understands the principle of submission is one that the devil fears. This is because the greatest challenge of the devil is submission and it was on this account that he lost his splendorous position in heaven as the anointed cherub. James, the Apostle warns the believer that intends to take the devil on to meet the foundational requirement of submission.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7).

A person submitted to God easily submits to his fellow man who is placed in authority over him. The office of authority comes with the unique "Mashiyach" anointing, which is the designated anointing that operates offices in the spirit realm. One's *"Mashiyach"* anointing grows by submission. James, the Apostle reveals

how God gives more grace to the man who is submitted:

> *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (James 4:6).*

Is it any surprise that the devil lost his place because of pride and his lack of submission? Consequently, Paul teaches that a woman is supposed to have the sign of submission on her head because of the angels.

> *For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. (1 Corinthians 11:10).*

In the angelic realm, the protocol of submission is sensitively cardinal. No wonder the moment Jesus submitted his will in the garden of Gethsemane, angels were sent to strengthen him.

> *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. (Luke 22:42-43).*

To reiterate, a person under submission enjoys the supply of more grace from the spirit realm abundantly with reference to James 4:6 "But he giveth more grace..." Since the Holy Spirit is also referred to as the Spirit of Grace, it should imply consequently that God supplies an ever increasing spirit to the one who walks in submission.

5. Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly

> *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16).*

The word of God is the divine meal of your spirit.

> *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. (1 Peter 2:2).*

When we come into Christ freshly, it takes the milk of the word to grow our spirits to matured men. To be filled with the Spirit, the word of Christ must dwell in you richly. At the

beginning of this book, we learnt that the word of Christ constitutes the elementary teachings and advanced teachings. Steady growth and advancement in knowledge in the word of Christ fills you with the Spirit. We learn in 2 Peter 3:18 that the means to grow in grace is by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;

> ***But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.***

Moreover, the multiplication of grace in one's life is by avenue of the knowledge of God.

> ***Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, (2 Peter 1:2).***

The more you increase in knowledge, the more grace will be accumulated in your spirit to build you up into a perfect man.

The constant study and meditation in the word of God is one cardinal means of being filled with the Spirit.

6. Practice Spiritual Breathing Exercises

> *All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; (Job 27:3).*

From this verse above, it is important to understand that your nostrils are a gateway to your inner man, and that is a pathway of the Spirit of God into your inmost being. Is this not the reason why Jesus, after resurrection passed the Spirit on to his disciples through their nostrils as he breathed on them?

> *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. (John 20:22).*

We find a remarkable connection between breath and the spirit of man and Holy Ghost in scripture. At the very moment when the disciples of Jesus first received the Spirit, Jesus breathed on them. Subsequently, on the day of Pentecost, before they were filled with the Spirit, scripture says that there was a rushing mighty wind:

> *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4).

At the inception of man, the word of God says that God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of Adam before he became a living soul:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7).

Additionally, Jesus, in John 3:8, also says,

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus proclaims that every man that is born of the Spirit is as the wind, and interestingly, the Spirit himself is a wind, rendered in the Greek as

"pneuma" and in the Hebrew as *"ruach"*.

Finally, in Job 32:8 we read,

> ***But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

The Hebrew word for "inspiration" in the verse above is *"neshamah"*. It means the vital breath or living wind. The verse can thus be rendered as *"there is a wind in man: and the vital breath or wind of the Almighty gives him understanding."*

It is beyond doubt that there is a strong association of the Spirit and breath. To be filled with the Spirit, a man would have to learn the art of taking vital breaths in consciousness and in meditation. This is not taught in many churches but is a truth in scripture.

In prayer and meditation in the word, you must learn to take controlled and relaxed breaths as you focus on the revelation you are imbibing into your spirit. This is one of the vital means by which you can be filled with the Spirit.

CHAPTER 11: THE BAPTISM INTO FIRE

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Luke 3:16).

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples enjoyed more than just baptism into the Holy Ghost. They were also baptised into fire as scripture says, "*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*"

After this encounter, their lifestyle and speech evidenced those who had been baptised in fire. Fire is a consuming and purifying element. These are the two characteristics of one who has been baptised into fire. Firstly, his words are a consuming fire, and secondly, he has been purified by the fires of trials, afflictions and suffering.

Peter was inspired to utter words filled with fire after his experience of fire baptism on the

day of Pentecost. Scripture asserts that after his message, the people were pricked in their heart by reason of Peter's words;

> ***Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37).***

Baptism in fire causes a man's words to carry fire. You can know if you have been baptised in fire by checking the effect of your words in the hearts of men.

God created the tongue of every man to be a fire. Depending on whom that man yields himself to, this fire is activated for manifestation; be it godly or satanic. James, the Apostle affirms this in James 3:6;

> ***And the tongue is a fire...***

After the resurrection of Jesus, the word of God says that he met two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Astoundingly, the eyes of these disciples were shut spiritually that they could not realise it was Jesus. However, there was something

strange and yet wonderful about Jesus as he conversed with them. The remarkable thing about this conversation was that even though they did not make Jesus out, they couldn't deny the impact of his fiery words on their hearts. After Jesus had vanished from their sight, they confessed among themselves;

> *...Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:32).*

Their hearts burned by reason of Jesus' words. One that has been baptised in fire causes the hearts of his hearers to burn by reason of his speech. Jeremiah, the Prophet was given this grace when he was told by God that his words had been made a fire.

> *Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I WILL MAKE MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH FIRE, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. (Jeremiah 5:14).*

For one's words to devour his hearers, those words carry the potent ability to convict their hearts and make those hearers surrender totally to God.

Jeremiah's words carried the vehemence to melt the stony hearts of his hearers just as fire devours and consumes everything in its way. Stephen, the evangelist being full of the Holy Ghost, manifested the same grace when he addressed his audience in the book of Acts 7:54-55;

> *WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS, THEY WERE CUT TO THE HEART, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. BUT HE, BEING FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

It takes a man who is full of the Holy Ghost in the demonstration of the baptism of fire to speak and create that kind of effect on his hearers. In Romans 12:11, scripture asserts

> *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

> *Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavor; be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord. (Romans 12:11 AMP).*

The Greek word for "fervent" is *"zeo"* which means to be hot, to boil or to glow. The Amplified Bible renders it as "to be aglow and burning with the Spirit". The baptism of fire is essentially the fervency of the Spirit at the highest boiling point, manifested through speech. This fervency makes the hearts of men to kowtow to the word of God alongside demons shrieking in fear at one's words and presence. It is this dimension that the demons took notice of even when Jesus was miles away making them tremble at his presence.

And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (Luke 8:27-28)

A man with the baptism of fire has an evoking presence to align the world to run in its right course:

And the tongue is a fire ...and setteth on fire the course of nature..." (James 3:6).

It is certain that the baptism in fire brings a lot of persecution the way of a man. This is because his words carry fire and prick the hearts of men. Definitely, not all would be comfortable with a man that has been baptised in fire. Jesus was greatly persecuted by the Jews because his words were a fire. His apostles were also persecuted and killed because they spoke in fire power.

In Luke 12:49-50, Jesus said;

> *I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*

As the agent that baptises with fire, and knowing the effect of the baptism in fire, Jesus said that he had come to send fire on the earth. This is because he knew that the moment his disciples were baptised in fire, their words would become a fire that would scorch men, stir them up and prick their hearts. The same account is reported vividly by Matthew as the baptism of sufferings:

> *But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup*

that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. (Matthew 20:22)

The cup Jesus spoke of in this verse was the cup of suffering. To be baptised in fire signs you up for persecution and suffering.

The Prophet, Jeremiah, makes an interesting statement in Jeremiah 20:9;

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

As one whose words had been made a fire to devour his hearers, he surely faced a lot of persecution. At a point, he resolved never to make mention of God or speak His word again because of the afflictions he faced. Nevertheless, he confessed that he could not keep his mouth shut because the word of God was in his heart as a burning fire and shut up in his bones. This is the experience of the baptism in fire: the fire of the word engulfs you and fills every part of your

being. It drives you to speak God's word in fiery power and to do things ordinary people cannot do.

In Hebrews 12:29, we read that our God is a consuming fire.

For our God is a consuming fire.

CHAPTER 12: BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

This is a very rare kind of baptism in the church spoken of by Paul, the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 15:29-32;

> *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? WHY ARE THEY THEN BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD? AND WHY STAND WE IN JEOPARDY EVERY HOUR? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*

The Mormons which is the Church of the Latter Day Saints have a very interesting explanation of the baptism for the dead. They claim that when one's relative dies in an unsaved state, a living relative can be baptised in water for the dead person so that he can be saved and proceed to heaven. There is no biblical proof for this assertion; there is no such baptism in the scriptures.

To answer the question of what the baptism for the dead is, we have to read 1 Corinthians 15:29-32 carefully. Right after the Apostle, Paul, mentioned the baptism for the dead, he proceeded to expatiate the context of what he was communicating. He said, *"...AND WHY STAND WE IN JEOPARDY EVERY HOUR? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I DIE DAILY. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus..."* To be baptized for the dead is to position one's self in constant jeopardy for the sake of the progress of the kingdom of God while drawing inspiration from the forerunners in the faith who have given up their lives for the kingdom. It is to ascent in one's mind that, for the sake of a better resurrection, one will imperil his life even if it ends him up in martyrdom.

In the apostolic faith, one very important thing that was always emphasised was a "better resurrection" to come.

> ***Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. (Hebrews 11:35).***

Due to this hope and assurance the early apostles possessed, scripture says that they disposed themselves willingly in the challenge of jeopardy and persecution. However, the confidence and encouragement they had for which reason they did this, was that there were predecessors who had hazarded their lives for the name of Jesus Christ even unto death, and had obtained a better resurrection. This served as an exemplary inspiration for all other believers to stand their grounds and never deny the faith in earnestly contending for the faith.

> *Dear friends, I've dropped everything to write you about this life of salvation that we have in common. I have to write insisting — begging! — that you fight with everything you have in you for this faith entrusted to us as a gift to guard and cherish. (Jude 1:3, MSG).*

In the early church, before one opted to be baptised in water, this was a foundational teaching in their minds. They knew that they were signing up for a hazardous life. Indeed, in those days of much persecution, a "Christian" was a perilous name tag to bear. When one was coming to be

baptised, he was saying in his heart that *"I am ready, even if it means for death". "if ever this path I have chosen leads me to death, I am ready because there are martyrs who have gone ahead of me to receive a better resurrection."* The moment the baptism was over, they had settled their allegiance to be faithful to God as far as death.

Paul continues to say succinctly, in 1 Corinthians 15:312 *"...I die daily"*. For such a man like Paul, anyone who would company with him in the work of the ministry must agree that he is also a "dead man" who dies daily!

Ministry with the Apostle, Paul, was a dangerous endeavour. This is the man who said he fought with beasts in Ephesus. If one would walk with such a person, he could not but agree that he had signed up for a journey of death. In fact, the entire early church's testimony of Paul and Barnabas is that they were men that hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with

our beloved Barnabas and Paul, MEN THAT HAVE HAZARDED THEIR LIVES FOR THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. (Acts 15:25-26).

In Paul's own words, there was no peril he did not suffer for the sake of the ministry:

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, IN DEATHS OFT. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

To him, death was a constant happening: *"... in deaths oft..."* To affirm this estate, he declared that he had the sentence of death in himself.

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9).

So, as Paul walked about preaching the gospel, he had sentenced himself to death! Now, what would you do if this was the man that led you to Christ and you were supposed to look up to him in the faith? Meanwhile, he told the Corinthians;

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 1Corinthians 11:1)

To follow such a man, you had to be baptised for the dead; which was Paul. During the act of water baptism, some were baptised solely for the purpose of being baptised for the dead. This is what Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:29;

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

Having assurance of a better resurrection from the dead, they got baptised for the dead knowing that even if they were to lose their physical lives, they will gain it back in a better life after here.

Now, bear in mind that during the act of water baptism, the extent of one's knowledge determines the depth of one's experience. Consequently, that you have been baptised in water does not mean you have been baptised for the dead. However, if you enter the water with such an understanding, then you are surely being baptised for the dead. In the early Church, this was part of the experience they sought in water baptism. This baptism produces in you, a readiness for persecution whenever it shows up.

In the first century church, so many people were persecuted and killed and yet they kept their confession of faith till the very end. When new converts saw this, they were encouraged and requested to be baptised for the dead so that they would tread the same course should it be necessitated.

When a man's life challenges your spirit in the faith of Christ, you can be baptised for that course. Beloved, baptism produces in you, faithfulness towards God even when things get difficult. When you get baptised for the dead, toward a certain man or course, you are simply saying that

you are ready to stand in jeopardy with that man or course.

This confession at one's baptism seals up a man to his assignment in order to fulfil all righteousness.

> ***But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24).***

Paul, the Apostle could only make such an anchored confession because he had been baptized for the dead.

CONCLUSION

Dearly beloved, we have seen that even though the doctrine of baptisms is a part of the elementary principles of Christ, it forms an essential block in the advancement of the believer's growth in Christ. No matter how deep you have delved into the well of Christ, you can always go deeper. In Ezekiel 47, scripture recounts an interesting vision in which a man was made to stand in waters that issued from under the threshold of temple. At first appearance, the waters reached to his ankles. Next, a thousand cubit was measured and the waters reached to his knees. One might have been satisfied with this level but there was more to explore; another thousand cubit was measured and the waters reached to his loins. Yet, this was not all that God had to offer; another thousand cubit was measured and this time round, the waters became a river that could not be passed over.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. (Ezekiel 47:3-5).

In the faith of Christ, some are enjoying the grace of God only to the ankle level. Others are enjoying it to the knee and loin level. However, God's desire is for you to swim in the waters of life that cannot be crossed over. God wants you to be overwhelmed with all the blessings and grace that he has to offer you in Christ. Do not stop at your current level; plunge deeper. If you have not been baptized in water, seek the experience based on all the knowledge that you have received. Seek to be filled with the Spirit to the full, and seek the baptism of fire. Even more, endeavour to be baptised for the dead as you advance in your journey in Christ. Enjoy all the grace of God in baptisms. Shalom!