

The Blessed Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit

Lesson 6--Spirit Baptism

The key passage on Spirit baptism is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13-"For by one _____ are we all _____ (immersed, placed) 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." The "**one body**" spoken of in this verse refers to the **Church**. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the _____ over all things to the _____, which is his _____, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). "And he is the _____ of the _____, the _____" (Col. 1:18). The Church is defined as the body of Christ, and Christ is the Head of that body.

Spirit baptism is defined in 1 Corinthians 12:13 as that work of God whereby believers are baptized (immersed, placed) into Christ's Body, the Church. How then does a believer become a member of the body of Christ? It is by Spirit baptism.

Note: Some Baptist groups wrongly teach that 1 Corinthians 12:13 is referring to water baptism. They say that when a person is baptized in water he is then placed into the local church. They interpret "one body" as "the local church" (they deny the existence of a universal Church). Thus they are saying that water baptism is the means by which a person is placed into the local church (the local church being made up of water immersed believers). However, the verse says nothing about water. It simply says that the believer is baptized or placed into the one body. It does not say he is baptized into water. This Spirit baptism is something that takes place at the time of salvation, not at the time of water baptism. The Lord adds to the Church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). It doesn't say that the Lord adds to the Church daily such as should be baptized. As soon as a person is saved he is added to the Church, the body of Christ. In Acts 5:14 we learn that "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." This again implies that the moment a person believes (not the moment he is baptized in water) he is added to the Lord, and to the Lord's body, the Church.

This passage thus provides us with the key to unlock the answer to the important question as to when the Church began. If we can determine when Spirit baptism first began, then we will know when the Church began. When did God first baptize believers into His body? When were believers first placed into the body of Christ? To answer this is to determine the day on which the Church began.

Spirit baptism was first predicted by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11 (and in the parallel passages: Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33):

"I indeed baptize you with _____ 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 _____**, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11; compare Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

John's baptism was a water baptism ("I baptize you with water"); Christ's baptism would be a spiritual baptism ("He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit"). The "fire baptism" is for the unsaved and involves judgment. This "fire baptism" is yet future (see Matthew 3:12).

Notice the phrase, "He shall baptize you *with* (Greek-*en*) the Holy Spirit." The verb "shall baptize" is in the future tense, indicating that Spirit baptism had not yet taken place when John the Baptist spoke these words. John was predicting that it would happen in the future, but he did not predict exactly when it would happen. Notice also that Christ is the Baptizer. He is the One who will place believers into the body of Christ. He is the One who will build His Church (Matt. 16:18). Christ is also the Baptizer in 1 Corinthians 12:13, as will be demonstrated later.

In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus said, "I _____ build My Church." The future tense of the verb indicates that the building of the Church had not yet begun when Jesus said these words. He did not say, "I have built My Church." He did not say, "I am building My Church." No, the building project had not yet begun and thus the Church was yet future. At the time Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 16:18 the Church had not yet begun.

Today Christ is building His Church. He is adding to the _____ daily such as should be _____ (see Acts 2:47). But the question is, when did this building program first begin?

In Acts 1:5 the Lord Jesus predicted that Spirit baptism was still future:

"For John truly baptized with water; *but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many _____ hence*" (Acts 1:5).

According to our Lord's prediction, Spirit baptism had not taken place yet, though it would soon take place. No one had yet been immersed into the body of Christ. Thus, the Church could not have begun prior to Acts 1:5. When Jesus spoke the words of Acts 1:5, His death and His resurrection had already taken place, and yet Spirit baptism had not yet taken place, the Holy Spirit had not yet come, and the Church had not yet been formed. But the announcement of Acts 1:5 was very significant because Jesus said that Spirit baptism would take place "not many days hence" (not many days from that time). This means that it would happen soon, in a matter of days. Indeed, as we shall learn, it happened just 10 days later on the Day of Pentecost.

The Day of Pentecost and the unique events that took place on that day are described in Acts chapter 2. In this chapter Spirit baptism is not specifically mentioned. It is not until Acts chapter 11 that we are specifically told that Spirit baptism took place on the Day of Pentecost: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us at the _____* [on the Day of Pentecost]. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be _____ with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:15-16). Based on the clear statement of this passage we know that Spirit baptism first took place on the the Day of Pentecost. It was then that believers were first placed into the body of Christ. It was then that the Church began.

Acts 2
Jews were placed into the body of Christ.

Acts 8
Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles)
were placed into the body of Christ.

Acts 10
Gentiles were placed into the body of
Christ.

But someone might raise an objection and say, "The Spirit baptism mentioned in Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 is different from the Spirit baptism mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13. In Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 Christ is the Baptizer, but in 1 Corinthians 12:13 the Holy Spirit is the Baptizer. As we read the English Bible this seems to be the case, but the Greek construction of Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 is practically identical to 1 Corinthians 12:13, as the following chart illustrates.

All four of these passages are talking about the same baptism, and the Greek construction in all four passages is closely equivalent, as the following literal rendering reveals:

| Passage | Greek Construction |
|---------------|---|
| Matthew. 3:11 | He (Christ) shall baptize you with (in) Holy Spirit |
| Acts 1:5 | You shall be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) Holy Spirit |
| Acts 11:16 | You shall be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) Holy Spirit |
| 1 Cor. 12:13 | We all were be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) one Spirit into one body |

The order of the words in 1 Corinthians 12:13 has been altered in order to show that the same Greek construction is used. In the King James Version the Greek preposition *en* is translated "By one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13) which has led some to wrongly conclude that the Spirit is the Baptizer. But the passage should be understood in this way: "With (*en*) one Spirit were we all baptized (by Christ) into one body (the body of Christ, His Church)."

Not only did Christ place us into His body, but He also immersed us in the Holy Spirit. "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**" (1 Cor. 12:13). We have participated fully in the reception of the Holy Spirit with all the abundant blessings which accompany this reception:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the

Holy Ghost which (the word "which" refers to the Holy Spirit) **He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour**" (Titus 3:5-6).

". . . **having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit**" (Acts 2:33).

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly (innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit,** which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (John 7:38-39)

Praise God, the Comforter has come! The promise of the Father has been given! Spirit baptism began at Pentecost and continues throughout this present age whenever a person believes on Christ.

For other solid Biblical reasons as to why the Church began at Pentecost, see our study, [When Did The Church Begin?](#)

If you have received the Lord Jesus as your Saviour (John 1:12), are you thankful to be a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)? People speak of "going to church" but have you realized that you are the Church? Seeing yourself as part of the body of Christ will make a huge difference in your Christian life. God has joined you in a vital way with your Head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:30-32), and God has joined you in a vital way with every other believer in the Body. The Church is not an organization; it's a living organism, pulsating with the very life of God (Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20).

Important Grammatical Considerations

We have already demonstrated that the grammatical construction of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is identical to the Spirit baptism passages found in the gospels and in Acts. In each of these passages we learned that Christ is the Baptizer and He baptized in [Greek: en] the Holy Spirit (with or by means of the Holy Spirit).

It is possible that both Christ and the Spirit had a part in doing the baptizing. Christ could have baptized believers into the body by allowing the Spirit to actually do this work. This is illustrated in John 4:1-2. In John 4:1 we are told that **Jesus baptized disciples**, even more than John the Baptist baptized. In John 4:2 we discover that Jesus Himself did not baptize anyone! How could He baptize many but not baptize anyone? The answer is that Jesus baptized many disciples but He did this by allowing His disciples to be the ones who actually did the work of baptism. It's possible that this is the case in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Jesus Christ is the Baptizer (in light of Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5, etc.) but the actual work of baptizing was carried out by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the instrument that Christ used to carry out His baptizing work. This concept is not foreign to the New Testament epistles. We would all agree that Jesus saves and yet the actual work of salvation is carried out by the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 6:11).

It is certainly appropriate to say that Christ immerses His believers into the body of Christ, and thus has rightful claim to the title of the Baptizer. In Matthew 16:18 we learn that it is Christ Himself who will build His Church. In Acts 2:47 we learn that it is the Lord (Jesus Christ) who adds to the Church daily such as should be saved. Consider also Acts 2:33 where the Lord Jesus is the One who sheds forth the Spirit. The Lord Jesus, in perfect co-operation with the

blessed Person of the Holy Spirit, accomplished this great work, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Further Grammatical Considerations

This section is somewhat technical, but the grammatical facts of the case argue strongly against the view that there are two Spirit baptisms in the New Testament (a view held by ultradispensationalists and others). According to this view, Christ is the Baptizer in Matthew 3:11 (and parallel passages); Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:15, and the Holy Spirit is the Baptizer in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Ultradispensationalist Charles Baker, for example, argues for two baptisms and that the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is the personal agent (He is the Baptizer).

The construction is the preposition **en** used with the dative case: “in one Spirit” or “with (by means of) one spirit.” The translation “by” (KJV) could be problematic unless it is understood as “by means of” or “by the instrumentality of.” **But it does not mean personal agency.** If this is what Paul meant he would have most probably used the preposition **hupo**. Dana and Mantey say the following: “**Hupo** is most frequently used for expressing agency. In fact, agency is expressed with the aid of **hupo** more frequently than it is by all the other methods combined” (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, p. 112).

Example: Matthew 3:11 says, “He (Christ) shall baptize you.” Suppose we were to take this sentence and make it passive. It would then read as follows: “You shall be baptized **by Him (by Christ).**” If we were to write this phrase in Greek, the Greek preposition that would be used for “**by**” would be “**hupo**” and it indicates that Christ is the personal agent. In other words, He (Christ) is the Baptizer, the One who does the baptizing. Another example is in Matthew 1:22, “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken **by (hupo)** the Lord **through (dia)** the prophet, saying... (Isaiah 7:14 is then quoted). Who was the One who spoke? It was the Lord! The Lord was the personal Agent. He was the Speaker. The prophet was the intermediate agent. The prophet was the instrument that God used. God was the One who spoke, but He used His prophet to do it.

In Matthew 3:11 and its parallel passages the same grammatical construction is used (**en** with the dative) with the same meaning. John said, “I baptize you with (**en**) water. . . He will baptize you with (**en**) the Holy Spirit.” John was saying: “I am using water to baptize you but He will use the Holy Spirit to baptize you.” Christ will use the Holy Spirit to baptize believers and He will use fire to baptize unbelievers, but whether it is believers or unbelievers, Christ is the Baptizer. [John MacArthur has an excellent discussion of this in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. See under 1 Corinthians 12:13.]

A. T. Robertson, in his monumental *Grammar of the Greek N.T.*, cites many examples of “**en**” with the dative being used in an instrumental sense but gives no examples of it being used for personal agency. This would mean that the Spirit was the instrument that Christ used to baptize believers into the body but the Spirit was not the personal Agent (that is, He was not the Baptizer except in the sense that He was the agent or instrument that Christ used to do this work).

In *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament* (10th edition) by A. T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis, the authors point out that **hupo** is used for the direct agent (personal agency). They then list four other prepositions which are sometimes used to express agency (**apo, ek, para, pros**), but **en** is not one of them.

The following discussion is by Daniel B. Wallace in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (pages 373-374):

1. En + Dative for Personal Agency?

Some have suggested that either the naked dative or **en** + the dative can express personal agency in the NT. However, once a clear definition is given for personal agency, this will be seen to be a rare or nonexistent category. Williams defines the dative of agency as denoting “the agent (personal) by whom something is done. The only difference between means and agency is that means is impersonal, agency is personal.”

This definition is a little too general. It would be better to say that when **en** + the dative expresses the idea of means (a *different* category), the instrument is used *by an agent*. When agency is indicated, the agent so named is not used by another, but is the one who uses an instrument. It may be noted here that an intermediate agent, usually expressed by **dia** + the genitive, is an agent who acts *on behalf of* another or in the place of another. This agent is not, strictly speaking, *used* by another as an instrument would be. Thus, **en** + dative to express *means* can be (and often is) used of persons, though they are conceived of as impersonal (i.e. used as an instrument by someone else). For example, in the sentence “God disciplined me by means of my parents,” “God” is the agent who used the “parents” as the *means* by which He accomplished something. The parents are, of course, persons. But they are conceived of as impersonal in that they are the instruments used by another.

According to our definition, if **en** + dative is used to express agency, the noun in the dative must not only be personal, but must also be the agent who performs the action. BDF accurately assess the NT situation of the naked dative used for personal agency: “Dative of agency is *perhaps* represented by *only one genuine example* in the NT and this with the perfect: Luke 23:15 [italics added].” **In summary, we can say that there are no clear examples of the dative of agency in the NT, and even if the category does exist, it is, by all counts, exceedingly rare.**

Wallace then gives two examples to illustrate his point and both of these examples relate to Spirit baptism:

1) Mark 1:8 “but He (Christ) shall baptize you **with** the Holy Spirit”

Here it is obvious that Christ is the agent (since “He [Christ]” is the subject) and the Holy Spirit is the means (and perhaps sphere) that the Lord uses to baptize.

2) 1 Cor. 12:13 “for **by** one Spirit we all were baptized into one body”

Our contention is that this is an illustration of **en** used for *means*. By calling “Spirit” means here does *not* deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. Rather, the Holy Spirit is the instrument that Christ uses to baptize, even though He is a Person. Since **pneumatic hagio** [Holy Spirit] clearly indicated means in Mark 1:8 (as in several other passages dealing with Spirit-baptism), it is surely not unreasonable to see “Spirit” as the means here. Furthermore, if the Holy Spirit is the agent in this text, there is a theological problem: When is the prophecy of Mark 1:8 fulfilled? When would *Christ* baptize with the Holy Spirit? Because of the grammatical improbability of **pneumati** [Spirit] expressing agent in 1 Cor. 12:13, it is better to see it as means *and* as the fulfillment of Mark 1:8. Thus, Christ is the unnamed agent. This also renders highly improbable one popular interpretation, viz, that there are *two* Spirit baptisms in the NT.

[End of quotation from Wallace]

Thus, the theory that the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is the Baptizer and that there are two Spirit baptisms in the NT is extremely unconvincing grammatically and highly improbable. Indeed, Ephesians 4:5 says that there is "**one baptism**" (water baptism, of course, being a wonderful picture and symbol of that one baptism).

In summary, in dealing with the grammar of 1 Corinthians 12:13 we have concluded that Christ is the Baptizer and the Holy Spirit is the Instrument that Christ used to do this baptizing work. We have understood the pronoun "en" with the dative in its instrumental sense and have translated it "with" or "by means of" or "by the instrumentality of." Thus Matthew 3:11 could be paraphrased in this way: John baptized with water but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

There is another possibility allowed by the grammar, and this would be to understand the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 as the element (or sphere) into which the believer has been placed. We would thus translate the pronoun "en" by the English pronoun "in." Christ has baptized believers in the Holy Spirit (and "in" in this sense would almost carry the meaning of "into"). If we interpret Matthew 3:11 in this way we could paraphrase as follows: John immersed in water but Jesus will immerse in the Holy Spirit. That is, water was the element into which those baptized by John were placed and the Holy Spirit would be the element into which Jesus would place believers.

Although this view is grammatically possible, it does not seem to be the best view theologically in the light of New Testament teaching. 1 Corinthians 12:13 does not say that believers are placed into the Holy Spirit but it says they are placed into the body of Christ. In Galatians 3:27-28 believers have been placed or baptized into Christ (with the result that they are **in Christ**). This is also the case in Romans 6:3.

In light of these considerations, it seems best to regard the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 to be the One that Christ the Baptizer uses as His Instrument to place believers into the body of Christ, and this great work first took place on the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church.

Baptized Into Jesus Christ

Believers have a glorious position. They are **in Christ**. They are in God's beloved Son: "Therefore if any man be _____, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"There is therefore now no condemnation (judgment) to them which are _____ Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

How did believers enter into this position? How does a saved person get to be positioned in God's Son? It happens by way of a spiritual baptism (not a water baptism). It happens the moment a person is saved. This is the point of time when God places the believer in His Son:

Galatians chapter 3:

26: For ye are all the children of God by _____ in Christ Jesus.

27: For as many of you as have been _____ (immersed, placed) into Christ have put on Christ.

28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one ____ Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

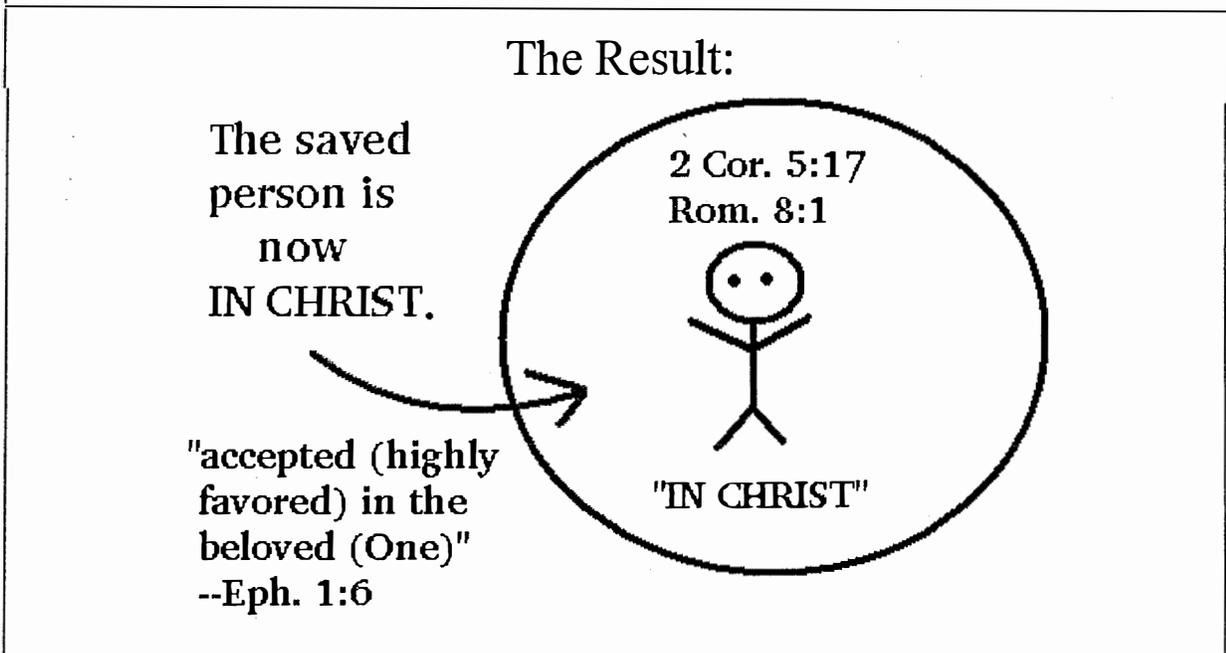
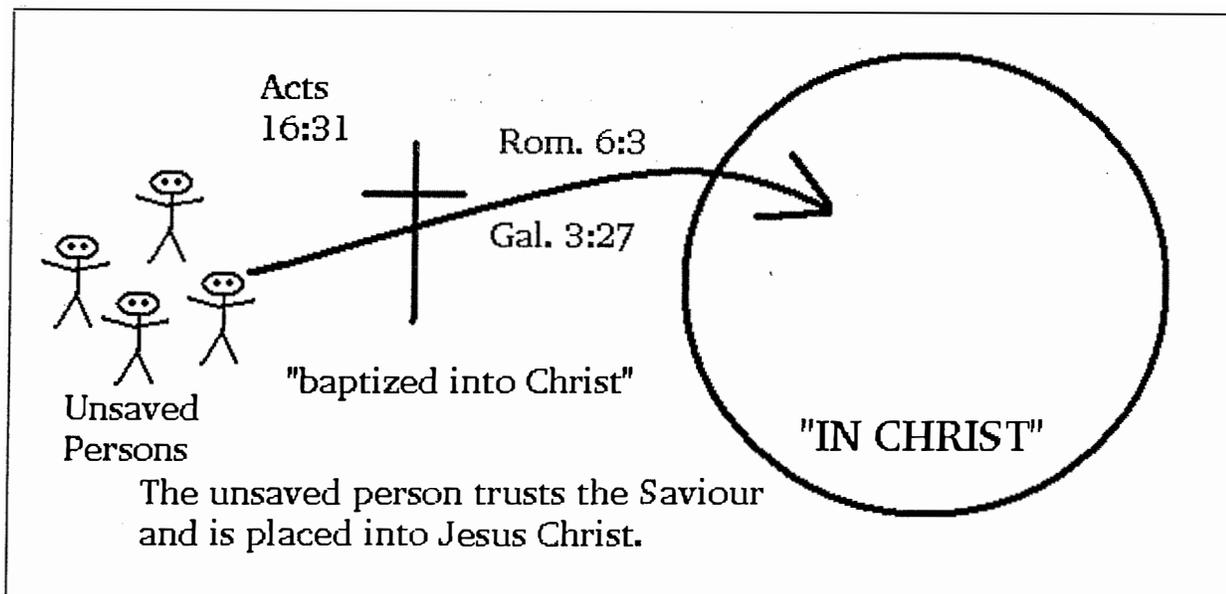
Romans chapter 6:

3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were _____ (immersed, placed) into _____ were baptized into his death?

4: 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.

5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:3-5).

Water baptism is a symbolic baptism that pictures a real baptism which takes place the moment a person is saved. At the moment of saving faith, a person is baptized or placed into Jesus Christ, with the result that the person is now "in Christ." This real baptism is illustrated below:



Since the believer has been baptized into Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), then this means that he has also been

- 1) baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3)
- 2) baptized into His burial (Rom. 6:4)
- 3) baptized into His resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5)
- 4) baptized into His Body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13).

In other words, the believer has been totally identified with Jesus Christ, so much so that the Lord Jesus could say to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou _____?" (Acts 9:4). We know that Paul persecuted believers (1 Cor. 15:9). Why then did Jesus say, "Why are you persecuting Me?" If the Body suffers, then the Head feels it!

Water baptism then is to be a picture of this glorious relationship and position that the believer has IN CHRIST. Thus I (as a believer) may say the following:

- 1) Because I am IN CHRIST I have been identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4) and thus water baptism is to picture the fact that I died with Him (as far as my old life is concerned) and that I now share His resurrected life (Gal. 2:20).
- 2) Because I am IN CHRIST I am a new creature in Him (2 Cor. 5:17) and thus water baptism is to picture the fact that I no longer want to be living unto myself but unto the One who died and rose again for me (2 Cor. 5:15).
- 3) Because I am IN CHRIST I am a member of His body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13), and thus water baptism is to bear testimony to the fact that I am now a member of the body of Christ and identified with a local assembly of believers (compare Acts 2:41-42).
- 4) Because I am IN CHRIST I have complete forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7) and thus water baptism is a symbolic picture of the washing away of my sins (compare Acts 2:38; 22:16).
- 5) Because I am IN CHRIST I am not under condemnation (Rom. 8:1) and thus water baptism bears testimony to the fact that I am free from guilt and I have a good conscience towards God (1 Pet. 3:21).

Practical Significance of Spirit Baptism

1. I have been placed into His Body. I am vitally joined to my Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is my Life (Col. 3:3-4). I am vitally joined to my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am part of a living organism, pulsating with the life of God.
2. I am eternally safe and secure in Christ forever. In order for me to lose my salvation, someone would have to dislocate me from the body of Christ (remove me from the Body!). This will never happen.

3. The fact that I am Spirit baptized should foster Christian unity. There is "one Body" and "one Spirit" and "one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-6). Every blood-bought believer has been placed into the Body of Christ, and we are fellow members of the same Church. We are joined to the same Head. We have been saved by the same blood. We are indwelt by the same Spirit. We are children of the same Heavenly Father. We are students of the same Book ("one faith"). We are partakers of the same life. We are all looking for the same blessed hope. Blessed unity and precious oneness!

4. Spirit baptism brings me into a new and glorious position. See our study on [What It Means to be IN CHRIST](#).

5. Spirit baptism identifies me with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. The work of Christ accomplished for me becomes very personal. His death becomes mine. His life becomes mine. I died with Him and I live with Him and He lives in me (Gal. 2:20).

**So near, so very near to God
Nearer I could not be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God,
I could not dearer be;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.
(author unknown)**

"The baptism of the Holy Spirit is that divine operation which places believers in the Body of Christ."

**William MacDonald,
*Believer's Bible Commentary***