

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WATER BAPTISM AND THE MOMENT OF RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Abstract. From the New Testament's point of view, there are some differences between the time of the water baptism and the time of receiving the Holy Spirit. Even if chronologically the two acts can be very close, we can always make a clear temporal distinction between them. Using the most relevant passages from Acts, this article intends to prove that in all cases the baptism with the Holy Spirit was a distinct experience from the water baptism. The article also describes tangentially the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: water baptism, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of baptism is characterized as one of the most important biblical doctrines, an appearance often inappropriately materialized therefore raising many polemics, arguments and contra arguments. The biblical text (New Testament) is the first and the most striking example of the importance of baptism, thus there are many passages relating to this act. The verb βαπτίζω (to baptize) appears fifty-eight times and the noun βάπτισμα (baptism) thirty times while the total occurrences of different grammatical forms of the word baptism appears eighty-eight times in the Bible. The etymologically meaning of the word comes from the Greek verb *to baptize* (βαπτίζω) which means “to overcome” or “cover completely with a liquid”, which requires total immersion.¹

Throughout history there were different opinions about the differences and the similarities between the moment of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the moment of receiving the Holy Spirit.

When we are talking about the receiving the Holy Spirit in the Primary Church (and the mostly today principles haven't changed), we must talk about at least four different contexts that the book Acts is relating: the first blaze of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,28) the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the Samaritians (Acts 8,4-25), the return and the receiving of the Holy Spirit by Saul (Acts 9,12.17), and the receiving of the Holy Spirit in case of the disciples from Ephesus (Acts 19,1-6).

¹ J. STRONG, *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*, Dictionaries of Hebrew and Greek Words taken from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, 1890, Online version: <http://www.e-sword.net/dictionaries.html> (accessed at 24th november 2011).