

While many of us think of John the Baptist when it comes to baptism, some theologians believe the act of baptism began with the Jewish high priests. The origins of baptism might be found in the book of Leviticus where the Levitical priests were commanded to perform a symbolic cleansing in water before and after performing their priestly duties.

Leviticus 16:4 tells us, *“He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on.”*

Scripture also states in Leviticus 16:23-24, *“Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people.”*

Although the act described in these Old Testament passages was not specifically called “baptism,” it does highlight how important and holy ceremonial cleansing is to God.

### Getting To Know You

1. Are you afraid of the water? Do you know how to swim?

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2. Were you baptized as a child? An adult?

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### Into the Bible

1. While submersion in water clearly is ‘cleansing’, according to Romans 6: 3,4, what more importantly happens to us through baptism?

*“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”* [Romans 6: 3,4]

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2. Peter shocks the newly converted Jews in Acts 10:44-47. What was their reaction? What effect do you think this had on the new church? Are you praising God for **all** your fellow believers?

*“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”* [Acts10:44-47]

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3. What does it mean to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? How can you or someone else see it? (Hint: Just like the wind, you can’t see it, but the effects are evident!!)

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As Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, we are united through the baptism of one Spirit into one body.

Read 1 Cor. 12:12-13

*“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

What are some of the “functions” of The Body of Christ?

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### Taking It Home

1. How might you or your Small Group heed Jesus’ command to make disciples and baptize people of Bergen and Rockland County? Or beyond?

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2. How are you “functioning” in the Body of Christ? What role are you playing?

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## “Connected” [1 Corinthians 12:13]

I. **Connected to C**\_\_\_\_\_ [Romans 6:3-4]

*“Or don't you know that all o! us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

1. If we are saved by grace and not good works, should we just keep on sinning?
2. Is this “baptism” water baptism or some other baptism?

W\_\_\_\_\_ baptism is an O\_\_\_\_\_,  
P\_\_\_\_\_, S\_\_\_\_\_  
Of an I\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_ R\_\_\_\_\_.

II. **Connected by the B**\_\_\_\_\_ **of the S**\_\_\_\_\_.  
[Acts 11:15-18; ]

*“Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ “*  
[Acts 11:16]

III. **Connected to the C**\_\_\_\_\_ **[The “body of Christ”].**  
[1 Corinthians 12:12-13]

*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”* [1 Corinthians 12:12-13]

1. It happens to all B\_\_\_\_\_.
2. It happens the moment we are S\_\_\_\_\_.
3. It is the work of the H\_\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_\_.