

# One Baptism

by G.W. North

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*G.W. North's sermon emphasizes the unity of water and Spirit baptism as one essential experience in the Christian faith.*

**Scripture:** Acts 19:5

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "Baptism"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of baptism in the early Church, particularly in the context of the Ephesians' experience. He explains that Paul re-baptized them in water as a public confession of faith, which was accompanied by the simultaneous baptism of the Holy Spirit. North argues that there is no scriptural basis for separating water baptism from Spirit baptism, as both can occur together, reflecting the unity of the two experiences. He highlights that this understanding of 'One Baptism' reveals the intention of God in the administration of baptism, showing it as a visible and invisible act of faith. Ultimately, North asserts that both baptisms are integral parts of a singular spiritual experience.

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## Transcript

Treating these Ephesians as Jews or proselytes to Judaism, Paul dealt with them in the matter of baptism in the manner formerly shown in chapters 2 & 8. This was quite correct procedure, indeed he could do no other. At Jerusalem Jews and proselytes had been baptised in water, and at Samaria also people who had been anciently proselytised were also baptised in water.

Responding to the apostles' doctrine the Ephesians were re-baptised in water as a confession of their faith in Jesus' name, who in response to that faith baptised them in the Holy Ghost. As has already been suggested about the earliest administration of baptism on the day of Pentecost, perhaps immersion in water and in the Spirit were simultaneous in this case also. The record of it, when read in the original, reveals that there is no reason why we should believe otherwise.

Note: When viewed in the light of the new place that the administration of baptism in water held at this juncture of the Church's history, this truth is as deeply significant as anything yet revealed. An examination of Acts 19:5 & 6, shows that since the day of Pentecost there is no scriptural ground for believing that water baptism and Spirit Baptism need ever be separate experiences, nor yet that the order must be first baptism in water and then Baptism in Spirit.

The Visible and the Invisible

We read that when Paul had laid his hands upon them 'the Holy Ghost came on them'. The use of the aorist participle with the word 'when' purposely gives it a sense of reference to a past act, 'having done'. There is no grammatical reason to believe that it was other than an immediately past act such as would be necessary for the administration of water baptism.

Paul's act of immersing these Ephesians in water could have been synchronous with the Lord's action in immersing them in Holy Spirit. By this the One Baptism would have been both received and demonstrated at the same time, the water being the medium in which it was demonstrated before men, and the Holy Ghost being the member of the Trinity in Whom it was accomplished before (for) God by Jesus Christ. If this was indeed so, then upon this final occasion at Ephesus the intention of God is plainly seen. In the cases of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, and Cornelius' household -- the first distinctly Gentile gathering the Lord had put the priorities right by baptising them in the Spirit before they were baptised in water.

Now we see the possibility that moving on yet further still, at Ephesus He put the two together that they may be seen as the one they really are. Truly they are one, being two parts of one whole (this is precisely what he wrote later to these same people, namely -- 'there is one baptism') the one part visible and the other invisible, the invisible being the important experience.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gw-north/one-baptism/>

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