



# We Believe in the Holy Spirit

## *One Church and One Baptism*

### *Lesson 4*

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**Review.** How does God speak to us?

## **Introduction**

Define the word *church*.

Define the *Holy Christian Church*.

Where will the Church be found?

We study Scripture's teaching of the Holy Christian Church in connection with our study on the Holy Spirit. Why?

## **One Holy Christian and Apostolic Church**

The book of Acts records the incredible growth of the early Church. Just as Jesus had promised, he sent his Holy Spirit and on Pentecost Sunday, the Spirit was poured out and the Church grew. Throughout Acts, we see the Spirit at work as many were added to the Church as the Word was proclaimed and people were baptized.

Did the Church exist prior to Pentecost? Did it exist in the Old Testament?

**Genesis 4:26** – At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

**Genesis 15:1-6** – After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.”<sup>5</sup> He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”<sup>6</sup> Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

**Romans 4:1-8** – What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?<sup>2</sup> If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God.<sup>3</sup> What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”<sup>4</sup> Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.<sup>5</sup> However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.<sup>6</sup> David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup>“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

**Galatians 3:1-9** – You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.<sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?<sup>4</sup> Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing?<sup>5</sup> Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?<sup>6</sup> Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”<sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.<sup>8</sup> The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”<sup>9</sup> So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

How does the New Testament Church differ from the Old Testament?

What do the following passages teach us about the Church?

**Acts 2:42-47** – <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. <sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**1 Peter 2:4,5, 9-12** – As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

**Galatians 3:26-29** – You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Ephesians 2:19-22** – You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also *members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.* In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What is the significance of each of the following words?

*One*

*Holy*

*Christian*

*Apostolic*

**Discuss:**

- Sadly, many have been misled by a visible church and their consciences have been burdened unnecessarily. For this reason, they have become turned off to "church" and don't want to have anything to do with a church. What truths might you share with that individual?
- Respond, "The church is all about rules."
- If there is only one holy Christian Church, why are there so many denominations? What confusions may arise for someone who is outside the church and makes this observation?
- *Agree or disagree:* Even though the Church is invisible it is not unnoticeable.
- How have you seen the Spirit at work in your life and around you to gather people into the one Holy Christian church?

## **We Acknowledge One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins**

What do we learn about baptism from the following passages?

**Matthew 28:18-20** – Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Mark 16:15,16** – He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**Titus 3:4-7** – But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

**1 Peter 3:21,22** – and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Why do we confess *one* baptism?

**Ephesians 4:3-6** – Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

When we confess or acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, it is more than just reciting a biblical doctrine. We are stating and remembering that we are baptized. Consider the various times that Paul reminded Christians of their baptism and the practical application it has in our lives:

**Romans 6:3,4** – don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.

**Galatians 3:26,27** – You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.

**Ephesians 5:25-27** – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

**Discuss:**

- A friend who has strayed away from church now returns as an adult. He acknowledges that for many years he lived a life apart from God. Now that friend expresses a desire to be baptized again so that he can rededicate his life to God. How would you guide your friend in that case?
- Another friend had a very limited connection to church as a child. There’s a chance that she was baptized as an infant, but there is no record of it and no one in her family can attest to her baptism. How would you guide your friend in that case?
- Your baptism has meaning for your daily life. How does your baptism impact the way you view yourself? How does it impact the way you view other Christians?