

THE DOCTRINE OF NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISMS

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The New Testament teaches the doctrine of baptisms.

Of the doctrine of BAPTISMS, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:2)

The Apostle Paul refers to the *doctrine of baptisms* in the plural. A doctrine is the instruction and teaching of a set of beliefs. Although Paul speaks of the doctrine of baptisms, he also writes about *one baptism*.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, ONE BAPTISM, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

The baptism Paul is referring to in the verse above is water baptism, since he speaks of ONE BODY. (We will see later in this lesson that water baptism has to do with becoming part of ONE BODY). We conclude that there are more than one *type of baptism*, but only one *valid form of water baptism*.

The word baptism is a transliteration of the Greek words baptizma, baptizō, and bapto. The most basic definition of the word baptism is to dip or to immerse, to make whelmed (that is, fully wet); to submerge, to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to overwhelm, and to identify with.

Pastor Myers writes:

"The first thing that we must realize about the word baptism is that, like many confusing words in Christianity, it is not a translation of a Greek

word, but a transliteration. Since there is so much division and strife over what the word means, Bible translators have traditionally chosen to leave the word untranslated, and just change the Greek letters of the word into English, and leave it to the reader to figure out what the word.

In Greek literature, “baptism” rarely refers to what we think of as “baptism with water.” Instead, the word refers to a wide variety of events or ideas. It is used to refer to a sinking ship or a drowning person, and also to someone who is overcome by sickness and disease and “sinks” into death. In some Greek references, it refers to people who sink into sleep, intoxication, or impotence, or even to those who are overwhelmed by faults, desires, and the magical arts (Oepke, TDNT, I:530).”

With these things in mind, we must conclude that not every reference to baptism involves being submerged under water; rather, it pertains to being immersed, overwhelmed, or overcome by something else. It means that after the “baptizma” experience, you are no longer who you were before; you are now fully overcome, joined to, submerged in, or identified with something or someone else.

Therefore, whenever you see the word “baptize” or “baptism” in Scripture, it would be wise to stop and change the word to “submerge” and then ask the question, submerged into or with what?”

Before we look at the "one baptism", let's take a look at five various baptisms spoken of in the gospels and epistles.

i. Baptism of Repentance

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (Mark 1:4)

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:3-5)

Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 11:16)

ii. Baptism of the Holy Ghost

I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. (Mark 1:8)

The baptism of the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with water. Instead, it is becoming overwhelmed and submerged in the fire of the Holy Ghost.

I indeed baptize you with water 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 Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matthew 3:11)

The baptism of the Holy Ghost first occurred on Pentecost (Acts 2:3-4). Before that, many had been filled with the Holy Ghost during Old Testament times..

1. John was filled with the Holy Ghost: For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15)
2. Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: (Luke 1:41)
3. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost: And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, (Luke 1:67)
4. Old testament Prophets were moved by the Holy Ghost: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)
5. David spoke by the Holy Ghost: Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (Acts 1:16)

After the Holy Ghost fell on Pentecost and baptized all who were in the upper room with cloven tongues of fire, the people of God continued to be filled over and over again with the Holy Ghost.

Peter Acts 4:8, Peter & John Acts 4:31, Paul Acts 13:9, The Disciples Acts 13:52.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a separate and unique experience of being overwhelmed with the fire of the Holy Ghost.

iii. Baptism of Suffering:

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. (Matthew 20:22)

And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: (Mark 10:39)

Jesus asked His disciples if they were able to drink the cup of death and be baptized with the overwhelming suffering that He would be baptized with. He promised them that they would indeed be baptized with the baptism of suffering. Every one of them suffered a martyr's death, apart from John, who was exiled to the Island of Patmos as a religious prisoner.

iv. Baptism of the Blood

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped (bapto) in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. (Revelation 19:13)

When Jesus returns the second time, He will come riding on a mighty white horse of strength and power, clothed in a vesture that has been dipped (bapto) in blood. The flowing robe clothing His resurrected body has been baptized in His resurrected, overcoming blood. Many suggest that the robe is stained by the blood of His enemies that He overcomes. However, this cannot be the truth because He is seen riding into the battle with the "baptized" vesture. He wears this garment as a witness of the cross and the victory He obtained through His death and resurrection over every opposing force that wars against the Truth!

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14)

The saints who come out of the great tribulation, having overcome the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet, are also clothed in robes that have been washed (they have been baptized as it were) in the victorious blood of the Lamb.

The baptism of the blood should be our daily experience. The wicked one will never overcome us if we are clothed in the spiritual garments that are baptized in the overcoming blood of the Lamb.

v. Baptism of Complete Truth - Making Disciples

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Earlier in the lesson, we looked at the meaning of the word baptism: submerging and being overwhelmed by. Let's quote the verse above by replacing key words with the meaning of the original words:

*Go ye therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations, **submerging them** in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: teaching them...*

Disciples are not made by "water baptism"; instead, they are made by teaching, training, or submerging them in the totality of the truth. If water baptism made disciples, the church should be full of disciples, yet this is not the case.

A disciple is a follower of example, a pupil, a learner—someone who increases in knowledge, is informed, and practices what He is taught. Jesus admonished His disciples, now apostles, to go and make disciples everywhere and submerge them in the Name (representing nature, character, authority, example, and power) of the triune, one God—the Father, Son (Word), and Holy Ghost. Discipleship is to be conducted in the authority and power of the Godhead, which encompasses *all Truth*, not just part Truth! Many religious Christian groups today emphasize one or the other; for example, many focus solely on the "Holy Spirit" but mostly exclude the teaching and experience of the Son and the Father.

In Matthew 28, Jesus told His disciples to teach the totality of God. Then He admonished them to teach “all things” that He had taught them. Furthermore, he promised to send the Spirit of Truth (the Holy Ghost), who would lead them into “all Truth.” (see John 14:17).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (John 15:26)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

What powerful examples of the work, ministry, function, unity, oneness, and of the Godhead in the revealing of “all Truth.” This is what makes a disciple!

Water baptism does not make a disciple (even though disciples are water baptized). A disciple is made through teaching, training, and learning the principles of all Truth!

Some confusion arises, however, because the Apostle Mark records a different account of a similar command.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16)

This took place when Jesus appeared to His disciples as they sat having dinner. He opened by rebuking them for their lack of faith and hardness of heart because some of them had not believed those who had seen Him after His resurrection. However, He proceeded to tell them to go into all the world and “preach” the gospel. Here, He added that whosoever believes and is baptized (water baptism) shall be saved.

In Matthew 28, the story occurs on a mountain where Jesus had directed them to meet Him. This is different from the place or command given earlier. One instance was when the disciples were gathered for dinner; the other was on a mountain, at a meeting spot Jesus appointed. Mark’s account emphasizes preaching the gospel of salvation, while Matthew’s emphasizes teaching and making disciples. These are two very distinct commands!

Doctrine must be based on a two- and threefold witness from Scripture. There are no examples of any disciple or apostle baptizing anyone in water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. All instances of baptism in God's Word were carried out solely in the Name of Jesus.

vi. Baptism into One body (Christ's body) by the Spirit, in Jesus' Name

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 Corinthians 12:13)

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27)

Water baptism is a spiritual experience, at least it should be. Many people get baptized in water and end up simply getting their bodies wet without the baptism experience given by the Spirit of God.

Water baptism is about Christ Jesus and being part of Him! It's not about joining a church; it's about joining the family of His body. Therefore, water baptism is all about the Name of Jesus!!

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. (Ephesians 3:14-15)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the "family name." It should therefore come as no surprise that every New Testament example of water baptism was performed in the Name of Jesus.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) (Acts 8:16)

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:48)

When they heard this , they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:5)

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. 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)

The Name of Jesus contains the spiritual power that opens the experience of rebirth as a child of God and a part of the family of God, the body of Christ. Water baptism is not simply some symbolic act of confession; it is much more than that. Just like salvation and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are spiritual experiences, so also water baptism is an experience.

- Salvation by the blood is a spiritual experience performed by the Spirit.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

- The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a spiritual experience by the Spirit.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly 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)

- Water baptism is a spiritual experience in Jesus' name by the 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. For the body is not one member, but many. (1 Corinthians 12:13-14)

Not only does water baptism give us access to the body of Christ through the power in the name of Jesus, but it also symbolizes the following:

1. Baptism symbolizes Christ's death

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Romans 6:3

2. Baptism symbolizes Christ's burial

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. Romans 6:4

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12

3. Baptism symbolizes Christ's resurrection

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. Romans 6:4

4. Baptism symbolizes Newness of life

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. Romans 6:4

5. Baptism symbolizes partaking of Christ's planting

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

6. Baptism symbolizes Christ's circumcision

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:11-12

7. Baptism symbolizes putting on Christ

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27

8. Baptism symbolizes crucifixion

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Romans 6:6

BAPTISM IN JESUS NAME

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Acts 4:7-10

When Peter and John were questioned as to where the power came from, and by what NAME they performed miracles, they answered that it was in the Name of Jesus.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Colossians 3:17)

The power is in His Name (Matthew 28:18).

The ordinance of water baptism shall be done in the name of JESUS by immersion in water.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38

- Phillip baptized in Jesus's name.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12

- Saints in Samaria were baptized in Jesus' Name.

For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 8:16

- Gentiles commanded to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts 10:48

- Paul re-baptized the Ephesus Christians in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:5

- Jesus commanded His Disciples to baptize IN THE NAME of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matthew 28:19)

Jesus commanded His disciples to go and baptize in the Name of *the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. We have already seen in this study the probability that Jesus' command relates to baptism, or submergence, into all Truth, the totality of Truth regarding God, the Godhead, or the fullness of God found in Jesus. Making disciples involves teaching them the Truth. Jesus mentioned "name" in the singular, not plural. There is one Name that unites the three in one; that Name is Jesus. The Godhead cannot be fully explained without the Name that unifies the three rivers or streams of the Godhead—the name of Jesus.

- Name of the Father – Jesus said, "I am come in my Father's Name" (John 5:43).
- Name of the Son – "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name JESUS" (Mat. 1:21). (Luke 1:31.)

- Name of the Holy Ghost – Jesus said, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in MY NAME, He shall teach you all things” (John 14.26).

It is clear that the singular Name is Jesus! In His Name, all the Godhead is revealed. The power and effect of water baptism cannot have the impact for which it is provided until we believe in the power of the Name of the unified Godhead: Jesus!

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” Ephesians 3:14-15

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Colossians 2:9

Believers were baptized in Jesus’ Name, and then they became disciples by being submerged in the Truth. It is one thing to be a believer; however, it is a totally different thing to be a disciple. *Water baptism does not make you a disciple.* Still, it opens the way from the Courtyard into the Holy Place wherein were the Candlestick (complete light and revelation of Truth), and the Shewbread (the Presence and practical fulfilling of the Word of Truth). Both the Candlestick and the Shewbread were prophetic of the Word of God. The Holy Place submerged the priesthood (the Old Testament disciples) in the light, cloud, fragrance, and taste of Truth! As they entered the Holy Place, they were “baptized” as it were, in the light and cloud of frankincense that burned on the Shewbread. This is what makes a disciple!

And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. (Exodus 26:35)

To add to this profound mystery of the Name, it is worth mentioning that in the days of Jesus, teachers, masters, or Rabbis would ‘baptize’ their followers in ‘their own name’ if they accepted and adhered to their teachings. Baptism linked and committed a person to the “household” of the Master. Once they were committed through baptism “into the household” (the body), they later became disciples and followers by being taught by the Master whose household they were now a part of. The baptism served as a sign of commitment and loyalty to the teacher and the teachings that they would be

taught. For example, John the Baptist conveyed the message of repentance and *preparation for the coming Kingdom of God*. His followers were baptized “in John’s baptism,” which was a prophetic baptism of repentance and acceptance of the Redeemer whom John was sent to prepare the way for.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:3-5).

Knowing this, it is not difficult to understand that those who *accepted and believed the Gospel of Salvation* and of the Kingdom of God were baptized in the Name of Jesus! But baptism did not make a person a disciple. Being submerged in Truth is what made a disciple. Water baptism in Jesus’ name begins a believer's journey into discipleship through being taught, trained, and disciplined in the full truth of “The Name” — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost united in Jesus!

It was this end that Paul was referring to when he wrote to the Corinthians and said:

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 1 Corinthians 1:13-15

Paul did not wish for anyone to proclaim that they had been baptized in his name. Even though he admonished believers to “follow him”, he also made it clear that they were to follow him as he followed Christ. Christ Jesus was the object, the goal, the source, the leader, THE NAME!

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

THE SOURCE OF POWER IN WATER BAPTISM:

The power found in water baptism is not in the water itself, but in that which rests upon the water. The water is a visible vehicle upon which the invisible power of Jesus Name is manifested.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

The Rock that followed Israel throughout the wilderness journey was a tangible, visible rock. And yet, the Rock was Christ. The Rock produced both natural and spiritual water. The natural water was seen, felt, and drunk. But on the visible water rested the eternal spiritual waters of Christ, the invisible Rock that rested upon the visible rock.

THE ANOINTING OIL:

The anointing oil and the communion table tell us a similar story. The power of anointing the sick with oil is not in the visible oil, but rather in the invisible anointing of the Name of Jesus and the Spirit of God that rests upon the oil.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 9James 5:14-15)

Without faith in that which is invisible, namely, the Name of the Lord, the anointing oil is just that, oil. However, through the eyes of faith, we see and experience what we cannot see with our natural eyes: the invisible power. Like the water from the Rock, the oil is a visible vehicle upon which God's anointing rests.

THE COMMUNION TABLE:

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (1 Corinthians 11:26-29)

Discerning the Lord's body has nothing to do with discriminating against those who desire to partake of the table of the Lord, as many churches teach. In verses 24 and 25, Jesus said, "This is my body, and this cup is the New Testament in my blood." Clearly, He spoke of something divine, eternal, heavenly, and spiritual.

Upon the emblems of the bread and the cup of wine rest the invisible power of the Lord Jesus' body and blood. We do an injustice to our Lord and redeemer when we partake unworthily of His body and blood by not discerning the invisible presence and power of His resurrected body and blood that rest upon the bread and the cup.

Understanding these mysteries, we also realize that the power of water baptism lies not in the water itself, but in the invisible Name that rests upon it.

INTERESTING FOOTNOTES ABOUT WATER BAPTISM:

Britannica Encyclopedia, 11th Edition, Volume 3, page 365 – Baptism was changed from the name of Jesus to using the words Father, Son & Holy Ghost in 2nd Century.

Canney Encyclopedia of Religion, page 53 – The early church baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus until the second century.

Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion, Volume 2 – Christian baptism was administered using the words, "in the name of Jesus." page 377. Baptism was always in the name of Jesus until time of Justin Martyr, page 389.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 2, page 263 – Here the authors acknowledged that the baptismal formula was changed by their church.

Schaff – Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, Volume 1, page 435 – The New Testament knows only the baptism in the name of Jesus.

Hastings Dictionary of Bible, page 88 – It must be acknowledged that the three fold name of Matthew 28:19 does not appear to have been used by the primitive church, but rather in the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ or Lord Jesus.