

# DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

- I.** Introduction.
- A.** This doctrine is considered elementary teaching. Cf. Heb.6:1,2a (*instructions about baptisms/βαπτισμός – baptismos*)
  - B.** A baptism by definition is an identification of one object/person with another.
  - C.** There are 8 baptisms defined in Scripture; 5 dry (real) and 3 wet (ritual).
  - D.** The identification between the two objects/persons comes about as a result of immersion (wet) or union (dry).
  - E.** Of these baptisms, some are taught through typology.
  - F.** A type is a divinely purposed illustration of some truth.
  - G.** Pagan societies understood the concept and practiced baptisms:
    - 1.** In Homeric Epics, Ulysses' spear piercing the eye of Cyclops sounded like a smith when he “baptized hot metal in water to temper it”.
    - 2.** In Xenophon's Anabasis, new recruits were required to dip their spears into the blood of a pig in ceremony symbolizing further shedding of blood.
- II.** Vocabulary: There is no Hebrew word for baptism, only Greek.
- A.** βάπτω – bapto; verb; used 3x; to dip, dip into or submerge.
  - B.** βαπτίζω – baptize; verb; used 80x; to dip repeatedly, to immerse or submerge one object into another.
  - C.** βάπτισμα – baptism; noun; used 22x; the institution or ordinance of baptism, immersion, submersing.
  - D.** βαπτισμός – baptismos; noun; used 4x; a purification that is effected by washing in water.
  - E.** Βαπτίστης – baptistes; noun; used 14x; a baptizer, the one administering baptism; it is only used of John the Baptist in the N.T.
- III.** The 5 non-ritual or dry baptisms (actual or real identifications).
- A.** Moses and the Exodus crossing at the Red Sea as a type that teaches Spirit baptism into union with Christ. 1Cor.10:2: “*and all (Exodus = believers) were baptized into Moses (a type of Christ) in the cloud and in the sea (dry on 4 sides as a type of Spirit Baptism, a fact not true for the Egyptians = unbelievers)*”.
  - B.** The Cross: Luk.12:50, “*But I have a baptism to be baptized with and how distressed I am until it is finished (Christ identifying Himself with the suffering for sins in His work on the cross)*”.
  - C.** The Holy Spirit: 1Cor.12:13, “*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (the H.S. incorporating believers into the Church Universal)*”. Gal.3:27, “*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Spirit baptizing the believer into union with Christ)*”.
  - D.** Fire: Mat.3:11, “*He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (the fire deal with God's wrath upon His return at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent cf.2The.1:7-9)*”.
  - E.** Israel in the Millennium with the H.S. Mat.3:11 cp. Joe.2:28

- IV.** The 3 wet or ritual baptisms (water immersion that is symbolic).
- A.** John the Baptist: Mat.3:1-11; Mar.1:4-5; Joh.1:25-33
1. This baptismal ritual was based on repentance (change of mind).
  2. Israel was corporately in unbelief adhering to a system of salvation by works.
  3. John taught that they must change their mind and accept by faith in preparation for the One that was coming to take away their sins. Joh.1:29
- B.** Christ's baptism: Mat.3:13-17; Mar.1:9-11; Luk.3:21-23
1. Christ had no need for repentance or confession of sins.
  2. His baptism was to illustrate His Person that would be the substitute offering providing salvation under a real baptism, the cross.
  3. The Father supernaturally confirmed His identification. Cp.Mat.3:16-17
  4. His baptism officially inaugurated His ministry of Passion. Luk.3:22 cp.vs.23
- C.** Christian baptism.
1. The ritual was commanded of the disciples by the risen Lord before His final ascension. Mat.28:16-20
  2. Qualification for this ritual is that one is a believer; otherwise it is ritual without reality.
  3. One should be stimulated to apply because of resident doctrine as Peter implies (1Pet.3:21 esp.21c "*good conscience*").
  4. Symbolically the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.
  5. This is portrayed in the act of complete body submersion and ascent from the water.
  6. Combined, the acts picture both positional sanctification (union in Christ under eternal security) and ultimate sanctification (eternal victory).
  7. There are two types that illustrate both aspects and both are associated with the Noahic flood:
    - a. Noah's ark that was used to deliver him and his family from the flood is a type of Christ picturing saving faith (positional sanctification). Heb.11:7
    - b. The floodwaters were a type of baptism illustrating ultimate sanctification/vindication as a result of Ph<sub>2</sub> faith in application as "*a response to God from a good conscience*". 1Pet.3:21 (emphasizes application in its symbolic significance)
  8. That Christian baptism holds both Ph<sub>1</sub> and Ph<sub>2</sub> significance is implied in the instructions associated with Christ's orders in Mat.28:19 to make "*disciples of all the nations*" in association with the ritual.
- V.** Some erroneous views concerning water baptism.
- A.** There are two extreme schools of thought that fallaciously attack Christian baptism:
1. That baptism is efficacious.
  2. That water baptism is not a bonafide ritual ordained for the Church.

- B.** The first example is promoted by the faith + works (or simply works) approach to the SAJG.
- C.** They view water baptism in a sacramental perspective in which baptism is part of a progressive result of securing salvation often in a further line or process of other works.
- D.** The approaches have different twists of distortion such as viewing baptism both as literal and symbolic supernaturally transforming the individual into its symbolic references.
- E.** Churches/religions that promote this view include Catholicism, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist, Apostolic Brethren, etc.
- F.** 1Pet.3:21 makes clear that the ritual is not efficacious in no uncertain terms.
- G.** The other view that denies water baptism as applicable for the Church distorts Jesus command of Mat.28:19 as reference to Spirit baptism or only directed to early Jewish believers.
- H.** However, the ritual is seen as a regular feature of the Church from the day of its inception. Act.2:38,41; 8:26-38; 9:18; 10:44-48
- I.** Paul indicates that it was a regular feature of his ministry, although he himself did not baptize many. 1Cor.1:10-17
- J.** It was still understood as a common and accepted practice at the time of writing of 1 Peter ~65 AD. 1Pet.3:21
- K.** Those in opposition to water baptism include Quakers, Salvation Army and certain hyper-dispensational types (only accept Paul's Epistles as applicable for the Church today).
- L.** Other distortions to the ritual include: Aspersion (sprinkling on the head); affusion (pouring on the head) and other partial immersion versus submersion.
- M.** Infant baptism practiced by many churches is also unbiblical:
  - 1.** These disregard the doctrine of God consciousness and culpability of free will as it pertains to saving faith. *See doctrines of God Consciousness and Volition.*
  - 2.** Some of these believe that when an infant is baptized, God creates faith in the heart of that infant i.e., Lutherans.
  - 3.** There is no mandate or precedence in the N.T. for ceremonial "baby" dedications otherwise.