

# DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

(Hebrews 6:1, 2)

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## 1. Definition:

Baptism is **an identification** of one person or object with another. It is an act, an experience, or an ordeal by which one is purified, sanctified, initiated or named. The word was so used by the Greek poets, dramatists and historians to show a **change in the identification** of one object with another in order to give it a new nature or change its characteristics.

- a. Homeric Epics: When Ulysses' spear pierced the eye of Cyclops it sounded like the work of a smith when he **baptized** hot metal in water to temper it.
- b. Xenophon's Anabasis: In the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Spartan soldiers were required to dip their spears into pig's blood in a ceremony preparatory to going into battle. The identity of the spear thus being changed, **baptized**, from a hunting to a warrior spear.
- c. Euripides, writing in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., used the word **baptism** to describe a sinking ship. The sinking ship is identified, **baptized**, with the water which changes its nature from one that floats to one that sinks.

## 2. Etymology in the Koine Greek:

- a. βάπτω - bapto - (Greek verb) - "to dip in or under," as in sacral baths of ancient cults such as that of Isis; in the New Testament - "to dip" (John 13:26; Luke 16:24); and of the vestment of Jesus Christ as it is identified with the blood of His enemies." (Rev. 19:13)
- b. βαπτίζω - baptidzo - (Gk. vb.) - "to dip or immerse, to cleanse by washing, to baptize" - in ancient Egypt, the "river kingdom" taught that salvation was by immersion; from the time of Plato, the meaning was "to immerse," and the usual connotation was that of "going under and/or perishing;" Philo and Josephus rejected the idea that physical bathing could wash away the dirt of the soul; in the New Testament, it is used for **all types of baptisms** (Acts 19:4; 1 Cor. 10:2; 12:13; Gal. 3:27)
- c. βάπτισμα - baptisma - (Gk. noun) - indicates the institution (ordinance) of baptism; it can be a ritual baptism (Matt. 3:7; 21:25); it is used of Spirit baptism (Rom. 6:4); it is also a figure of martyrdom (Mark 10:38, 39; Luke 12:50)
- d. βαπτισμός - baptismos - (Gk. n.) - the act of baptism; it is used of washing dishes (Mark 7:4); doctrine of baptisms (Heb. 6:2)
- e. βάπτιστης - baptistes - (Gk. n.) - the one who baptizes, like John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1; 11:11; Mark 6:25)

## 3. Categories of Baptisms:

- a. **REAL BAPTISMS:** These are **actual identifications**, a person or persons identified with something real. These might be called “**dry baptisms.**”
- (1) **Baptism of Moses:** This is a double identification of the 2½ million Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1, 2):
- (a) Identification **with Moses** (a type of Christ)
  - (b) Identification **with the cloud** (the Lord Jesus Christ) and **with the sea:** all crossed the Red Sea on dry land. (Exodus 14:16, 29)
- (2) **Baptism of the cross (the cup):** This is a double identification. (Matt. 20:22; Luke 12:50)
- (a) Jesus Christ identified Himself **with the cross** and **with our sins.** (1 Pet. 2:24)
  - (b) All of the sins of the world were placed into one “cup” and poured out on and **identified with Christ;** the Father **judged all of our sins** when they were placed on Him Jesus Christ). (Mark 10:38, 39; 2 Cor. 5:21)
- (3) **Baptism of the Holy Spirit:** This is the Church Age believer’s identification with the strategic victory of Jesus Christ in the angelic conflict.
- (a) This is the salvation ministry of God the Holy Spirit whereby He enters **every believer into union** with Christ, seated at the right hand of God the Father. (Col. 2:12; 3:1, 3)
  - (b) This baptism makes the believer a member of the “**Royal Family**” of God forever. (1 Cor. 12:13; cf. 1 Pet. 2:9)
  - (c) This baptism **did not occur** in any previous dispensation. (Col. 1:25, 26)
  - (d) Jesus prophesied this work of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-20; Acts 1:5)
  - (e) This baptism **unites all members** of the Body of Christ. (Rom. 6:5; Eph. 4:5)
  - (f) This baptism **provides equality** in the Royal Family of God, not possible through physical birth. (Gal. 3:26, 27)
  - (g) This baptism is the basis of **positional sanctification:**
    - (1) It is the basis for **retroactive positional truth**, entrance into union with His death and burial. (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12) Believers in the Royal Family are thus separated from human good. (Titus 3:5, 6)
    - (2) It is the basis for **current positional truth** which ensures that believers in the Royal Family have a **permanent relationship** with the King of Kings and will live forever in the **New Jerusalem.** (John 14:1-3; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rev. 21:2; 22:14, 16, 17)
  - (h) This baptism interrupts the **Dispensation of the Hebrew** (Jew) and begins the Church Age. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:5; 2:3; 11:15-17)

(i) This baptism is **not an experience** that can be felt. (1 Cor. 12:13)

**NOTE:** The Greek aorist tense of the verb βαπτίζω, baptidzo, indicates a “**once and for all time**” event.

(4) **Baptism of Fire:** This baptism identifies the future “**tribulation**” unbelievers with judgment. The “**tribulation**” begins with Israel signing of a “seven year covenant” with the person known as the Antichrist and ends with the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 3:11, 12; 13:25ff; 24:9-30; Luke 3:16b, 17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9)

b. **RITUAL BAPTISMS:** These are **ritual identifications**, where **water represents** something real, other than actual water. These might be called “**wet baptisms.**”

(1) **John’s baptism:** This unique baptism identified John’s Jewish audience with **repentance** (a change of mind) as they confessed their sins, in anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven and the coming of Jesus, their Messiah. (Matt. 3:1-11; Mark 1:4, 5; John 1:25-33; Acts 10:37; 19:2-4)

(a) The water represents their **confession of personal sins.**

(b) The water also represented their **anticipation of the coming King and His kingdom.**

(2) **Baptism of Jesus:** This unique baptism identifies Jesus Christ with the **will of God the Father** in fulfilling the work of His First Advent, including the work of the cross. (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23)

(a) The water represents the **Father’s plan for salvation.**

(b) Jesus Christ identified Himself with the **Father’s will and plan**, namely, that He would go to the cross and provide salvation for all mankind.

(3) **Believers’ (Christian) Baptism:** This baptism is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ only, and is a **public testimony** of the believer’s faith in Christ for salvation. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41; cf. 10:43; 47, 48; 1 Cor. 1:13-17)

(a) The water represents **what the Baptism of the Spirit provides**, namely, entrance into **union with Jesus Christ and His body.**

(b) Water baptism has a double identification (Rom. 6:3-13):

[1] The believer **going under the water** is identified with Jesus Christ in **His death and burial** (retroactive positional truth), being free from sins.

[2] The believer **coming up out of the water** is identified with Christ in **His resurrection, ascension, and session** (current positional truth), walking in newness of life and producing divine good.

4. There are **two ritual ordinances** in the Church Age (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-27):

a. **Water baptism** – performed once and representing the believer’s salvation.

b. **Communion** – performed repeatedly in the church and representing fellowship.