



Baptism

Baptism means to identify or to be made one with. It means something so identified with something else that its nature or character is changed or it represents a real change that has already taken place.

There are two types of baptism – real and ritual. The real baptism is the actual identification and there are four real baptisms in Scripture. The ritual baptism is a representative identification and there are three ritual baptisms in Scripture. In ritual baptisms, the individual is identified with the water, but the water is symbolic of something else.

The baptism of the believer in the Church Age is the ritual or picture of the real baptism of the Holy Spirit that takes place at the point of salvation. Ritual baptism must follow salvation, never precede it.

The believer needs Bible doctrine before baptism to fully understand its meaning (i.e., positional truth, retroactive positional truth, current positional truth, experiential positional truth, human good versus divine good, etc.).

The believer was baptized in the early church very soon after salvation. Why? Because as soon as the individual was saved, Paul, or any other believer like Philip who was baptized immediately gave them a long lesson in Bible doctrine. This might have been six or seven hours of instruction. Immediately upon understanding the basic Bible doctrines, the individual was baptized with water.

The candidate for baptism is often a victim rather than a candidate. Why? They do not understand the doctrine reality behind the ritual. An individual believer should never be baptized until they understands the basic Bible doctrine relating to salvation.

Etymology of the Word Baptize

The verb “baptize” and the noun “baptism” are Greek words that are not translated, they are transliterations where the Greek letters are given English letters. Baptize is βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) and is pronounced “baptidzo” and is the basic root and means to identify with or to make one with, something so identified with something else that its nature or character is changed. There are many uses of *baptizō* in secular Greek sources and always has the idea of identification.

But baptism does not save! Water baptism symbolizes the change that has already taken place by believing in Jesus Christ. We know the etymology of *baptizō* because of the use of the word in ancient Greek literature. Ninth century B.C. Homer’s *Odyssey* used the word in this way. When the one-eyed Cyclops was speared by Ulysses, the sound was a hissing noise as when a blacksmith baptizes a piece of hot metal in the water. The iron was identified with the water causing it to be tempered.

The Spartans used the word baptize in the dipping of a battle spear point into hog’s blood to identify the spear with battle. Swords dipped in blood identified the sword with warfare. The sword was baptized and identified with the blood by immersing it in the blood. The sword came out bloody. Metal identified with water when tempering it or baptizing the metal.

Euripides used the word for a sunken ship identified with the bottom of the sea when it sank.

A piece of cloth was said to be baptized in dye and thus, a change of identity was the result. A pasture was baptized by fire, that is, its identity was changed from being green to being burned black. The word baptize has the basic meaning of a change of identity or identification with someone or something.



Real Baptisms: Actual Identification

Real baptisms are an actual identification of one thing with another. Real baptism involves no water at all.

Baptism of Moses

The children of Israel were identified with Moses and Moses was identified with the Cloud that represented the Lord Jesus Christ (the Shekinah Glory) as they passed through the Red Sea in deliverance. Water here speaks of judgment and the only ones immersed in water on that occasion were the Egyptians who drowned. 1 Cor. 10:1-2.

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" (1 Corinthians 10:1-2, NASB)

Baptism of the Cross or Cup

The Cup represents the Cross and into the cup is poured out the sins of the world. Jesus Christ "drank" this cup filled with our sins on the Cross. This speaks of Christ being identified with and judged for our sins through His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross with the result that we receive salvation when we believe in His atoning work on the Cross for our sins. He was made sin for us. Matt. 20:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24. See category on [Baptism of the Cup](#).

"But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able." (Matthew 20:22, NASB)

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

No water is involved with this baptism. At the point of salvation, God the Holy Spirit places each believer into union with the Lord Jesus Christ who is in session at the right hand of God the Father. Thus, the believer is placed into the body of Christ and are then positionally higher than the angels. Only then is the believer identified as a Christian. 2 Corinthians 5:17 is speaking of our position in Christ. The things that are new are eternal life, His righteousness, inheritance, etc. Overt activity is not in view in 2 Corinthians 5:17. 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 1:5; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3; Col. 2:12; Eph. 4:4-6. See category on [Baptism of the Holy Spirit](#).

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB)

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13, NASB)

"for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5, NASB)

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was



raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4, NASB)

“having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12, NASB)

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6, NASB)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur in the Old Testament. A believer is identified with Jesus Christ in two ways - Retroactive Positional Truth and Current Positional Truth.

Retroactive Positional Truth is defined as when Christ died on the cross over 2000 years ago, in position you died with Him, you were buried with Him, and you rose with Him. This did not become real to you until you received Him at the point of salvation. At that point in time, His death, burial and resurrection become retroactive. Even though it happened many years ago, it became actual when you believed. When Christ died on the Cross, He judged sin once and for all and rejected human good.

Current Positional Truth is defined as because of Retroactive Positional Truth, the Church Age believer enjoy certain things and shares certain things with Jesus Christ. Christ is currently seated at the right hand of God the Father and believers share this position. He is eternal life, so you share that eternal life. Jesus Christ is absolute righteousness, so believers share that righteousness through position and imputation. He is King, so we shall share this kingship and reign with Him. He is elected, so we share His election. Jesus Christ is predestined, so we share His destiny. He is the Son of God, so we become sons of God. He is the heir of God, so we share this inheritance which makes us joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Everything Jesus Christ has He shares with us because we are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Baptism of Fire

This the baptism of judgment. The unbeliever is identified with fire for eternity. The Tribulational unbeliever is identified with the defeat of Satan. The baptism of Fire occurs to all unbelievers alive on earth at the Second Advent and are removed from the earth prior to the start of the Millennium. This speaks of unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation being identified with the fire of judgment. Matt. 25:31-33; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 19:11, Matt. 24. See category on [Baptism of Fire](#).

““But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.” (Matthew 25:31-33, NASB)

““As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11, NASB)

"John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16, NASB)

Ritual Baptisms: Representative Identification

Ritual baptisms are water baptisms where the water represents something. The individual is identified with the water.



John the Baptist's Baptizing Ministry

Water represents or symbolizes the Kingdom of God which John preached. After the individual had believed in the coming Messiah – Jesus Christ, they were baptized with water. Since the water represented the Kingdom of God and the one baptized identified with water, thus they were identified with the Kingdom of God. The believers, when baptized by John, were indicating in effect; “I have previously believed in the Messiah to come, I am now symbolizing that identification with His kingdom by water baptism.” Luke 3:3; Matt. 3:6; Matt. 3:11. See category on [John's Baptizing Ministry](#).

“and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.” (Matthew 3:6, NASB)

““As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11, NASB)

“And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;” (Luke 3:3, NASB)

Baptism of Jesus Christ

Water represents the Father's will for the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The incarnation is God the Son agreeing to come to the earth and take on the form of a man - a true human body. This resulted in the unique God-man in Hypostatic Union forever. It was the Father's will that Jesus Christ go to the Cross and bear the sins of the world. By Jesus Christ being emersed into water by John the Baptist, He was saying He was willing to do the will of God the Father. Heb. 10:7.

““THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'” (Hebrews 10:7, NASB)

This was a unique baptism. Jesus Christ was not a sinner. Water is symbolic of the Father's will. Jesus Christ identified Himself with the Father's will in the execution of salvation. We cannot “follow the Lord in baptism” as to His purpose (securing our redemption), but we can in duplication of the mode of His baptism. It is better to never use the phrase. Our Lord was obedient to the plan and will of God the Father. In baptism, the believer is obedient to the plan and will of God. Matt. 3:13-17. See category on [Jesus Christ's Baptism](#).

“Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”” (Matthew 3:13-17, NASB)

Water Baptism

Water represents the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It symbolizes Retroactive and Current Positional Truth. It is the ritual that represents the real Baptism of the Holy Spirit that has already taken place at the point of salvation. Matt. 28:19.

““Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the



Son and the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19, NASB)

Since water baptism symbolizes the mechanics of real salvation that has already occurred, when you go under the water, the water symbolizes cleansing of sin and also rejection of human good. When you come out of the water and into the air, it symbolizes acceptance of divine good. Hence, water baptism illustrates Positional Truth. See category on [Water Baptism](#).

Use of the Word Baptize and Related Forms in Scripture

“Baptism” Matt. 3:7; Matt. 20:22-23; Matt. 21:25; Mark 1:4; Mark 10:38-39; Mark 11:30; Luke 3:3; Luke 7:29; Luke 12:50; Luke 20:4; Acts 1:22; Acts 10:37; Acts 13:24; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:3-4; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.

“Baptisms” Heb. 6:2.

“Baptist” Used exclusively of John the Baptist. Matt 3:1; Matt 11:11-12; Matt 14:2; Matt 16:14; Matt 17:13; Mark 6:14; Mark 6:24-25; Mark 8:28; Luke 7:20; Luke 7:28; Luke 7:33; Luke 9:19.

“Baptist’s” Matt 14:8.

“Baptize” Matt 3:11; Mark 1:4; Mark 1:8; Luke 8:16; John 1:26; John 1:33; 1 Cor 1:17.

“Baptized” Matt 3:6; Matt 3:13-14; Matt 3:16; Matt 20:22-23; Mark 1:5; Mark 1:8-9; Mark 10:38-39; Mark 16:16; Luke 3:7; Luke 3:12; Luke 3:21; Luke 7:29-30; Luke 12:50; John 3:22-23; John 4:1-2; John 10:40; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12-13; Acts 8:16; Acts 8:36; Acts 8:38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 11:16; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33; Acts 18:8; Acts 19:3-5; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13-16; 1 Cor 10:2; 1 Cor 12:13; 1 Cor 15:29; Gal 3:27.

“Baptizeth” John 1:25; John 1:33; John 3:26.

“Baptizing” Matt 28:19; John 1:28; John 1:31; John 3:23.