

## What Kind of “Washing” Is Baptism?

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by Bill Crews

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit used different words for “wash.” One word is **NIPTO**, and it is used whenever *only part of the body is washed*. **NIPTO** is used in Matthew 6:17 of washing the face, in Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:3 of washing the hands, in John 9:7, 11, 15 of washing the clay mixture from the eyes, and in 1 Timothy 5:10 and John 13:5-6, 8, 10, 12, 14 of washing the feet.

Another word is **LOUŌ**, and it is used of washing *all of the body or bathing*. In John 13:10 it is used of washing or bathing the entire body and is contrasted with the washing of the feet. **LOUŌ** is used of washing the body of Dorcas, who had died, in preparation for her burial (Acts 9:37). It is used of the washing of a sow in 1 Peter 2:22. It is used in a metaphorical sense of the Lord washing us from our sins (Revelation 1:5, KJV).

Still another word, **PLUNŌ**, is used of washing inanimate objects. **PLUNŌ** is used in Revelation 7:14 of the metaphorical washing of robes. A cognate word, **APOPLUNŌ**, is used of the washing of nets in Luke 5:2.

**“Baptism,”** which is *immersion in water*, is also a washing, a complete washing of the body. Hebrews 10:22 says, *“Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”* The word for “washed” in this verse is **LOUŌ**. When Saul of Tarsus was commanded by Ananias to *“arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name”* (Acts 22:16), the word used was **APOLOUŌ**, a cognate of **LOUŌ**.

If sprinkling or pouring a little water upon a person’s head constituted New Testament *“baptism,”* then **NIPTŌ** would be the appropriate word for such a washing of only part of the body, but **NIPTŌ** is never used for *“baptism.”* Is there a word used in the New Testament that means *“sprinkle”*? **Absolutely!** (**HRANTIDZŌ**, for example.) It is used in the book of Hebrews several times for the sprinkling of blood, either *literally* of animal blood under the old covenant or *metaphorically* of the blood of Christ which the other typified, but it is never used of *“baptism”* because “baptism” is immersion, not sprinkling. There are also New Testament words for *“pour”* (**BALLŌ** and **KATACHEŌ**, for example), but these are never used of *“baptism,”* because *“baptism”* is immersion, not pouring.

We must conclude, then, that *“baptism”* which is immersion of a person in water is a *“washing”* of the entire body. Friend, have you been *“baptized”* as the New Testament teaches?

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