

## Baptist Baptism Versus New Testament Baptism

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by Bill Crews

In Ephesians 4:5 the New Testament teaches that there is “one baptism” (in the same context, vv. 4-6, we are also told that there is one God and Father, one Holy Spirit, one Lord, one faith (the gospel), one body (the church, the spiritual body of Christ) and one hope (the hope of eternal life). Each accountable person needs to be certain that he has received the one baptism of this passage. In Acts 19:3-5 we read of twelve men at Ephesus who were “baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” by the apostle Paul. These men had already been baptized “into John’s baptism,” but John the Baptist (or baptizer) had been dead for more than thirty years, and his baptism was no longer to be practiced or received (see also Acts 18:24-26). There are many today who have been baptized, but who need to be baptized again.

If I honestly believed that Baptist baptism were identical to New Testament baptism, I would certainly say so and be willing to accept it. But I know for a surety that it is not. By New Testament baptism I mean the baptism commanded by Christ in His new covenant. I have a book of “Baptist Confessions of Faith” written by a Baptist preacher. I also have two Baptist Church Manuals written by Baptist preachers, church history books by Baptist preachers, and tracts and articles, and a Baptist encyclopedia. I know what Baptist churches teach, and I would not knowingly misrepresent them. Baptist churches reject infant baptism because they believe that baptism is for believers and that infants are incapable of being believers. In this they are right. In the first place the New Testament neither states nor necessarily implies that any infants were ever baptized. In the second place it clearly teaches that those who are baptized must be taught and must believe that teaching. Please read Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12; 8:35-38; 18:8, which all show that teaching and faith precede New Testament baptism.

Baptist churches reject the practice of sprinkling or pouring water upon a person for baptism and insist that baptism is the immersion of a person in water. In this they are right. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, and all Koine Greek lexicons define the word for “baptism” (actually a transliteration of the word) as “immersion, submersion, dipping, plunging, washing, overwhelming, etc.” and never as “sprinkling” or “pouring” (other Greek verbs had those meanings). Furthermore references to baptism and actual descriptions of baptizings clearly show that New Testament baptism is immersion in water. When the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, he and Philip came unto a certain water, he and Philip both went down into the water, he was baptized by Philip, and he and Philip both came up out of the water (Acts 8:35-38). In being baptized Christians are said to have been (by faith) buried with Christ and raised with Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Baptism involves a burial of a person in water and a resurrection of a person from water; it is to bring to mind the burial and resurrection of our Lord. Sprinkling or pouring of water upon a person is not New Testament baptism.

So far I have agreed with the teaching and practice of Baptist churches on baptism. Wherein do I disagree? In these five points:

1. Even though Baptist churches rightly teach that prospects for baptism must be capable of hearing and understanding the gospel and must be believers, in practice they baptize very young children who cannot comply with these conditions. The New Testament also shows that . . .

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