

Baptism in the New Testament is Immersion in Water

by Bill Crews

Consult any Koine Greek (the language in which the New Testament was written) lexicon, and you will find that the verb, **BAPTIDZO**, that is simply transliterated (not translated) “*baptize*” and the noun, **BAPTISMA**, that is simply transliterated (not translated) “*baptism*” describe the action of dipping, immersing, plunging, submerging, overwhelming, etc. They are never used to describe the action of sprinkling or pouring of anything on anyone.

By the time English translations of the Bible were being made, the practice of sprinkling or pouring of water upon the head of “candidates for baptism” was so firmly established (especially in the large and powerful Roman Catholic Church, as it was later in the Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian and other churches) that the translators were fearful of translating these words. They chose to view them as too controversial and opted to simply transliterate them and let the readers decide the meanings for themselves.

Even so, enough is said in the contexts where the words “*baptize*” and “*baptism*” are used that the action is still crystal clear. “*Baptism*” in the New Testament is obviously the immersion of a person in water.

1. Water is the specified element in which the action is to take place (Matthew 3:6,11; John 3:23; Acts 8:36; 10:47).
2. The person must be a penitent believer willing to confess his faith in Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-37; Romans 10:9-10).
3. That the action is immersion should be evident from these facts:
 - 3.1. John baptized people in the river Jordan. Matthew 3:6
 - 3.2. John baptized in Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there. John 3:23
 - 3.3. Jesus, when He was baptized by John in the river Jordan, went up straightway from the water. Matthew 3:16
4. When the man from Ethiopia was baptized by Philip, (a) they came unto a certain water, (b) they both went down into the water, (c) Philip baptized the man and (d) they both came up out of the water. Acts 8:35-38
5. In being baptized one is both buried and raised, and this action is likened to the burial of Christ in a tomb and His resurrection from that grave. Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4

Those who have had a little water sprinkled or poured upon their heads have not been baptized for the simple reason that baptism is immersion.

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