

Bible Baptisms Digest

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The New Testament mentions several baptisms. Failure to understand and distinguish between them leads to confusion and error. Note that *baptism always* connotes immersion, dipping, an overwhelming, or submersion. Consider this digest of Bible baptisms:

- **Israel's "baptism":** Paul described Israel's passage through the Red Sea (Exo. 13–14) as a baptism "in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1–2). Walls of water on either side and the cloud above fully immersed them. As that "baptism" freed them from Egyptian slavery, so our baptism frees us from sin's guilt and marks the beginning of a new life (Rom. 6:4).
- **Pre-Pentecost baptism:** John "the baptizer" first administered this baptism in water (as the apostles also did later [John 4:1–2]). It involved repentance and confession of sins (Mat. 3:6–9) and was "unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). It was preparatory for Jesus' kingdom/church (Mat. 3:2).
- **Jesus' baptism:** The baptism of Jesus by John was "one of a kind." As noted above, the baptism John (and later the apostles) administered was "unto remission of sins," but Jesus was sinless (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; et al.). When John at first refused to baptize the Lord, Jesus said it was necessary "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mat. 3:15). As "Son of Man," Jesus was subject to the Father's will, and John's baptism was part of His will. Jesus could not have remained a sinless man had he not obeyed this command.
- **Baptism in suffering:** Jesus referred to his agony on the cross as a "baptism" he must undergo (Mark 10:35–38; Luke 12: 50). His suffering at Calvary was not a mere sprinkling or pouring, but an immersion in it.
- **Holy Spirit baptism:** John stated that Jesus would baptize "in the Holy Spirit" (Mat. 3:11). Jesus later specifically applied this promise to His **apostles** (John 14:26; 15:26; 16: 13). Just before He ascended to the Father, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for its fulfillment (Acts 1: 1–5, 8), which came **only upon them** on Pentecost (26–2:1–4, 14). Implication demands that Paul was also baptized in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 11–12). Later, the Lord caused "the like gift" to come upon Cornelius and his guests (Acts 10:44–46; 11:15–17). This overwhelming in power was very exclusive,

was administered only by Christ, was not a condition of salvation, and is not known apart from these manifestations.

- **Baptism in fire:** John also stated that Jesus would baptize “in fire” (Mat. 3:11). He went on to describe this fire as destructive and “unquenchable” (v. 12). Fire baptism refers to the fire of Hell, the eternal abode of sinners after The Judgment (Mark 9:48; 2 The. 1:7–9; Rev. 20:14–15).
- **The “one baptism”:** **Only one** remains in effect from Pentecost (when first preached) “unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:19–20; Acts 2:38–47). It is a burial in water (8:36–38; Rom. 6:4), it is preceded by a confessed faith in Christ (Acts 2:37; 8:37) and repentance (Acts 2:38). It is the act in which one is cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Rev. 1:5) and is saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). It clearly is an essential condition to one’s salvation.

It is important to consider (and understand) all of the foregoing baptisms, but the only one that truly should matter to everyone reading these lines is the last one. Have you been baptized for the remission of yours sins and added by the Lord to His church?

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