

Heb 6:1 Therefore, having left the discourse of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to full growth, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Heb 6:2 of *the doctrine of baptisms*, [KJV also R. B. Thieme, Jr.], and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SEVEN BAPTISMS

Introduction

The word “baptize” is not an English word at all. It is a Greek word, baptizo, which means to identify. The verb “baptizo” occurs 80 times in the New Testament, while the noun form “baptism” occurs more than 20 times. Almost every time the word “baptize” or “baptism” (verb) is found in the New Testament it refers to one of seven baptisms in scripture, within the category of either a Real identification or Ritual identification, as follows:

1. **Real identifications** (Somebody is being directly identified with somebody or something else). In historical (chronological) order these occurred as follows:

- i. The baptism of Israel into Moses and the cloud. (1 Cor. 10:1-2)
- ii. The baptism of the cross. (Also called the baptism of the cup in Matt. 20:22)
- iii. The baptism of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13)
- iv. The baptism of fire. (Matt. 3:11)

2. **Ritual identifications** (a ritual is being used to symbolize (represent) a real identification that has already, or will take place). In historical (chronological) order these occurred as follows:

- i. The baptism of John. (Matt. 3:1-10)
- ii. The baptism of Jesus. (Matt. 3:13-17)
- iii. The baptism of believers. (Matt. 28:19)

DEFINING THE WORD ‘BAPTISM’:

The basic meaning of baptism means to dip.

Homer (an ancient Greek poet) used the verb ‘bapto’ to describe an ironsmith ‘dipping’ a piece of hot iron into water.

"Since the mass of iron, drawn red hot from the furnace, IS PLUNGED (BAPTIZED) in water; and the fiery glow, by its own nature quenched with water, ceases." (Homeric Allegories, ch. 9.)

In the Septuagint (LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament), Jonathan dipped (bapto) his staff into the honeycomb (1 Sam. 14:27), and in Luke 16:24 the rich man suffering in torments asks Abraham to send Lazarus in order that he might “dip [bapto] the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.”

In ancient times, “baptism” or “baptize” was often used in a metaphorical sense.

In the following examples an appropriate word to use in the English translation would be ‘overcomes’ or ‘overwhelms’. Please note the following examples:

- In Evenus of Paros, Epigram XV we read “*Baptizei d hupnoi geitoni tou thanatou*” : “He overcomes [baptizes] in sleep, neighbour of death.”
- "And he, overwhelmed (baptized) by anger, sinks; and desiring to escape into his own realm is no longer free, but is compelled to hate the object beloved." Achilles Tatius, book VI. ch. 19.
- "The second part the kings have received for public revenues;...and on account of the abundant supply from these, they do not overwhelm (baptize) the common people with taxes." Diodorus, the Sicilian, Historical Library, I. ch. 73.]
- "Knowing him to be dissolute and prodigal, and overwhelmed (baptized) with debts amounting to fifty millions." Plutarch, Life of Galba, XXI.]

Baptism means identification or association.

Xenophon said that the Spartans baptized [bapto] their spears by dipping them into a bowl of pigs blood. In this way the graduating soldiers were identified with their new status as soldiers ready for combat.

In another passage Xenophon described soldiers BAPTIZING a sword and a spear in blood before entering into a military alliance. The baptism of the weapons signified unity between the two sides, they were being ‘identified’ as members of a pact:

“Then, while they halted under arms in line of battle, the generals and captains had a meeting with Ariaeus; and the two parties—the Greek officers, and Ariaeus together with the highest in rank of his followers—made oath that they would not betray each otherThese oaths they sealed by sacrificing a bull, a boar, and a ram over a shield, the Greeks dipping a sword in the blood and the barbarians a lance.” (Xenophon: The Persian Expedition, Book 2, Chapter 2, section 8-9).

Baptism also represents a change:

The *baptizō* word was especially prominent in the dye trade. Cloth would be dipped or immersed into a vat of dye. The material was “baptized” in dye. When the cloth was removed from the vat of dye, it had a distinct and

new appearance. It was identified in a new way. Red cloth would come out of a vat of red dye. Blue cloth would come out of a vat of blue dye. Because of the dipping, the old cloth was now “identified” with the dye, leading to a permanent change in the cloth.

This is also used in Revelation 19:13 :

“And I saw Heaven opened. And behold, a white horse! And He sitting on him was called Faithful and True. And in righteousness He judges and **makes war**. And His eyes were like **a flame of fire**, and on His head many crowns. And He had a name written, one that no one knew except Himself. And He had been clothed in a garment dipped [βάπτω / bapto] **in blood**, and His name is called ‘The Word of God.’”

In the context of this verse we see Jesus Christ is setting forth to wage His war of righteous violence upon the enemies of the house of Israel (i.e. the Jewish people). The dipping [NOT “sprinkling” or “splashing” as some manuscripts and translations would have us believe] ,of His battle robe in blood signifies Christ’s identity as Lord of Sabaoth (Also: ‘Jehovah of Hosts’, or ‘God of the Armies of Israel’), the One who returns at the end of the Tribulation to destroy His enemies and save His people (1 Sam. 17:45; Ps. 59:5; Is. 13:9-11; 29:6; Mal. 4:1:3).

Another clear example showing the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both ‘bapto’ and ‘baptizo’. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be ‘dipped’(bapto) into boiling water and then afterward ‘baptised’ (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is for a short time, a ‘temporary immersion’. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, is more permanent, and produces a long lasting change.

So “baptize” in the classical Greek also came to mean to identify one thing with another thing. Through this identification the characteristic of the original thing takes on the characteristic of the second thing. (For example, the Spartan ‘cadet’ becomes a ‘soldier’; a piece of plain cloth becomes colored). Therefore, the interpretation of the word “baptism” in many contexts is “identification”.

Real Baptism No. 1

The baptism (identification) of Israel into Moses and into the cloud (1 Corinthians 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 [middle voice] into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

In this passage the apostle Paul speaks of the people of the Exodus generation (“our fathers”), all of whom were baptized into Moses, who was in turn identified with the Pillar of Cloud and the sea. Because Moses was God's

appointed leader, by baptism unto Moses they were identified with Moses and God's purpose for Israel through Moses.

The usage of the Middle Voice

In George G. Kline's article "The Middle Voice in the New Testament" he summarizes the three kinds of voice as such: "The active voice represents the subject as performing the action of the verb. The passive voice represents the subject as acted upon, and does not act. However, the middle voice denotes that the subject is in some special manner involved or interested in the action of the verb.

In the words of R.B.Thieme Jr. "The middle voice means they were benefited by this baptism. The indicative mood expresses the reality of this baptism and/or identification." (From sermon notes).

Moses was the only one who trusted in God and His promises to the people of Israel.

With the exception of Moses all the people rebelled against God at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:10-31). It was because of the faith-rest technique of Moses that caused the divine response of opening the sea.

What was the motivation for Moses to keep applying the Faith-rest drill, even under great pressure? His occupation with Christ!

By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, but he endured, as [as long as/ while] he kept on seeing the invisible one. (Heb 11:27)

"By faith [of Moses] they [the people of Israel, incl. the 'mixed multitude'] passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians attempting to do were drowned." (Heb. 11:29)

"Our fathers [the Jews of the Exodus generation] did not understand Your wonders in Egypt; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled at the sea, even at the Red Sea." (Ps. 106:7)

Baptized into The Cloud and The Sea

The cloud spoke of the Lord and divine guidance. The cloud is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). The cloud instructed them to move across the dried up sea, which is exactly what they did.

The sea, which God parted, spoke of divine omnipotence. That is, they actually walked through the dried path of the sea, and then God destroyed the Pharaoh and his army. God's reputation spread throughout the land because of the what He did at the sea (Jos. 2:10). This story is remembered throughout history, and so the people of Israel are 'identified' with the sea: the story of how God parted the sea and delivered them from the Pharaoh.

Summary

In the "Baptism of Moses", no Israelite got wet! Because the Jewish people were identified with Moses they were able to pass over the Red Sea and so were delivered from the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Real Baptism No. 2

The baptism of the cross (Also called the baptism of the cup)

The mother of James and John had come to Jesus asking that her sons could sit one on each side of Jesus in Heaven. (However, the Greek grammar tells us that James and John were complicit in her request). Salome has fallen into the common error of ambitious mother. Ambition on the part of parents for the children can often ruin the children. However, Jesus answers them all politely:

“ But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you ask. Can you drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said to Him, We can.” (Mar. 10:38, 39a; also Matt. 20:22)

The analogy of the cup

In certain passages in scripture we see that the cup is a symbol of judgment upon the evil doers:

“On the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; and a horrible tempest shall be the portion of their cup.” (Psa 11:6)

“For so says Jehovah, the God of Israel, to me, Take the wine cup of this wrath at My hand, and cause all the nations to whom I shall send you to drink it.” (Jer 25:15)

On the other hand, the cup that Christ will drink from speaks of judgment of the sins of the entire world. The analogy of ‘the cup’ for the sins of the world is clearly manifest in the following passage:

“And He went a little further and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will. “ (Matt. 26:39; also 42)

This refers to the judicial imputation of personal sins to Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ was identified with our personal sins and judged for them, so that Christ became our Savior (2 Corinthians 5:21; cp. 1 Peter 2:24).

“I have come to send fire on the earth [the baptism of fire at the end of the Tribulation]. And what will I do if it is already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed down until it is accomplished!” (Luk. 12:49, 50)

If we *translate* the contextual meaning of baptize (i.e. “to be identified”) and the noun baptism (i.e. “identification”) rather than just *transliterate* the words themselves, we understand that Jesus is going to “be identified [with the sins of the world] by means of an identification process [imputation of the sins of the world by God the Father]”. In other words, Jesus is saying to James and John: “Are you able to be imputed with the sins of world, to be made sin on behalf of mankind, and then be punished for those sins?” – and James and John say: “Yes”!

Jesus goes on to say that they [James and John] will indeed be baptized [identified], but here he is speaking of retroactive positional truth – the baptism by the Holy Spirit in which believers are identified with Christ’s death on the Cross, and His subsequent burial, and resurrection.

“And Jesus said to them, you shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized with you shall be baptized.” (Mar. 10:39b)

“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized [identified/placed in union with Christ] into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Rom. 6:3-5)

“...buried with Him in baptism, in whom also you were raised through the faith of the working of God, raising Him from the dead.” (Col 2:12)

Being our sin-bearer, Christ was immersed in our sin [imputed with our sins] and judged for our sins, thereby paying the penalty for our sin and guilt. He drank the cup of our suffering for us.

Real Baptism No. 3

The baptism [identification] of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place for every believer at the moment of faith in Christ, whereby the Holy Spirit identifies each Christian with the body of Christ (1 Cor.12:13; Gal. 3:26-28; Col. 1:18; 2:12).

“For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ. There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:27,28)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a personal experience [i.e. it is not an event you can perceive as it takes place], it is simply one of the 40 things that are given to the believer at the moment of salvation. 1 Corinthians 12:13 explains the mechanics of this baptism:

“For by one Spirit are we baptized [identified/entered into union] into one body [i.e. the body of Christ] whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:13)

This baptism is God the Holy Spirit identifying us with the Lord Jesus Christ forever.

The key verb here is "εβαπτισθημεν" (ebaptisthymen) from the root verb "βαπτίζω" (baptizo). The form of the verb is:

- i. Aorist tense: The Greek aorist tense of the verb baptizw / baptizo indicates a “once and for all time” event.
- ii. Passive Voice: Passive tense says we are being acted upon by the Holy Spirit. We don’t do anything to be baptized. God the Holy Spirit does the work.
- iii. Indicative mood: Declares a statement of fact.
- iv. First person plural: “We” meaning all believers in Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the means of forming the royal family.

“Christ” comes from the Greek word ‘Christo’. This translates the Hebrew word ‘Messiah’ which means “Anointed King”. Only Church Age believers (both Jews and Gentiles) are entered into union with Christ. Jesus has three royal titles: Son of God, Son of David, and King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

ROYALTY	ROYAL TITLE	ROYAL FAMILY
DIVINE <i>(as God)</i>	Son of God	God the Father God the Holy Spirit
JEWISH <i>(as man)</i>	Son of David	The Davidic Dynasty
BATTLEFIELD <i>(as God-man)</i>	King of kings, Lord of lords, The Morning Star	The Church

THE THREE ROYALTIES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
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The "Body of Christ" is identified as "The Church"

The "Body of Christ" refers to all believers in all locations at all times since the Day of Pentecost when the Church began to the day of the rapture, which will make the end of the Church Age. This is the “universal Church” (in contrast to a local church consisting of its own pastor-teacher, deacons, and congregation) and is made up of all believers everywhere throughout the Church Age (Colossians 1:18, 24).

Eph 4:4-5 “There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

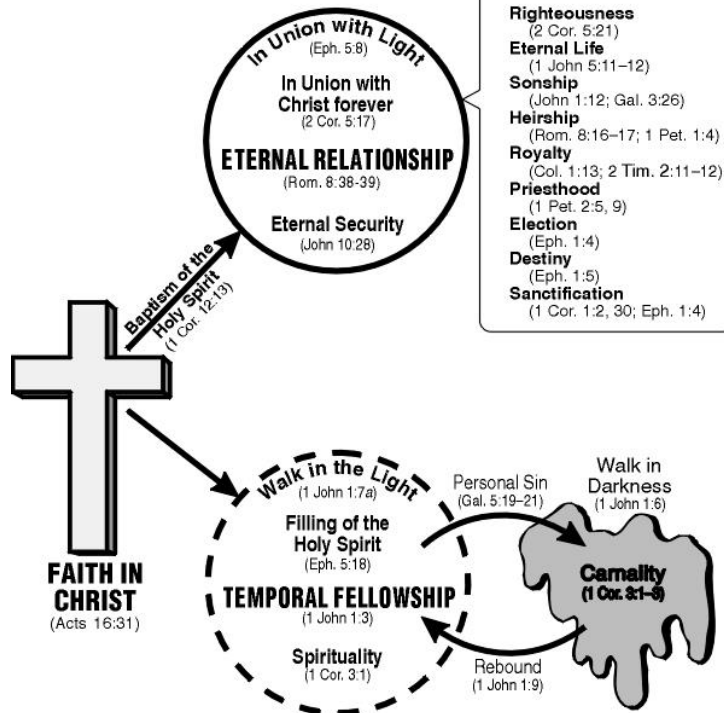
This baptism is the basis of positional sanctification.

By the baptism of the Holy Spirit we are sanctified (made Holy) because of our union with Christ (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Eph. 1:4). By being in union with Him we share in His divine attributes, as follows:

- i. His Righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21)
- ii. His Eternal Life (1 Jn 5:11-12)
- iii. His Sonship (Jn 1:12; Gal. 3:26)
- iv. His Royalty (Rom. 8:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:4)
- v. His Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
- vi. His Election (Eph. 1:4)
- vii. His Destiny (Eph. 1:5)
- viii. We are sanctified in Him (1 Cor. 1:2,30; Eph. 1:4)

TOP AND BOTTOM CIRCLES

Status of Believer in Top Circle: PERMANENT



Status of Believer in Bottom Circle: TEMPORARY

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Retroactive Positional Truth

“Retroactive positional truth” describes our entrance into union with Christ going back in time to the Cross. We are identified [baptizo] with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Eph 4:5; Acts 1:5).

Into His Death:

Rom. 6:3 “Or do you not know that all of us who have been *identified/placed into union* [through baptism by the Holy Spirit] into Christ Jesus [referring to all believers in Christ] have already been *identified/placed into union* [baptized by the Holy Spirit] into His death?”

Rom. 6:4 “Therefore, we have been buried with Him through *identification* [baptism by the Holy Spirit] into [His] death, so that as Christ was raised from the deaths [plural in the Greek, referring to both substitutionary spiritual death, and subsequent physical death] through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Into His burial and resurrection:

Rom. 6:5 “For if we have become planted together [σὺμφυτος / *sumphutos*] with Him in the likeness of His death [First class conditional sentence is a statement of fact: “...and indeed you have”], then not only this - we shall also be [united with Him] in the likeness of His resurrection.”

σὺμφυτος / *sumphutos*

- i. The word σύμφυτος / sumphutos is a compound word from “sum” = together (later appearing in English as: “sum” as in the result of two addends in an equation, ‘sum total’ etc.) and the verb φύω (also: φυτεύω) meaning ‘to plant’. The meaning is “plant together”.
- ii. The word ‘sumphutos’ is a hapaxlegomenon, i.e., it appears only one time in the entire New Testament. This is a very specific and technical event – Christ and the believer are both bought into ‘newness of life’ through His burial and resurrection. In this case, it is because of our union [baptism] into Christ that we are buried and resurrected with Him, though the Holy Spirit chooses to use this word as a synonym for ‘baptizo.’
- iii. Therefore, we see the analogy of the seed: first it must be planted [‘buried’] before it can spring to newness of life - the resurrection (Rom. 6:4).
- iv. Other planting analogies related to being in union with Christ found in the New Testament: Matt. 15:13; John 12:24, 32, John 15:1-8
- v. The believer is identified (in union with Christ) in His Ascension and Session at the Right Hand of God the Father:

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4-6)

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is directly related to the term “in Christ” :

The Greek phrase “εν χριστω” (“en Christo / in Christ”) appears 78 times in the New Testament, referring always to the believer’s irrevocable, eternal position in Christ. Because our position in Christ came about as a direct result of the baptism [identification] of the Holy Spirit we should therefore look at them as being two intimately connected events.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit = Identification with Christ = Union with Christ = Positional Sanctification = Sharing in the Attributes of Jesus Christ = Entry into the Body of Christ (the universal Church)!

The baptism of the Holy Spirit ensures that believers in the Royal Family have a permanent relationship with the King of Kings and will live forever in the New Jerusalem. (John 14:1-3; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rev. 21:2; 22:14, 16, 17)

We become new creations “in Christ”

“So that if anyone is in Christ [by FAICA – “Faith Alone in Christ Alone”], that one is a new creature [or: a new creation]; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

This is a very familiar passage, one which is often distorted in meaning, to make the new believer think this verse is talking about some kind of behavioral change. (For example, the Chinese Bible mistranslates the words ‘new creation’ as ‘a newly created person’ which also leads the reader to think the Bible is emphasizing a behavioral change.) Many new believers receive some legalistic bullying of some kind – being told they need to change their behavior or else they will suffer bad consequences either from God or from the church – or, they are simply

impressed with certain Christians displaying moral behavior. Because of these things they think this verse emphasizes what we are doing (or should be doing) for God, instead of understanding that this verse is really teaching what God has done for us.

For the first time in history we have something that no group of believers will ever have again. As Church Age believers we are a part of the body of Christ, we have the phrase “in Christ Jesus,” and we are a new (spiritual) species. We are NOT a new species because we have given up anything or changed our behaviour pattern. We are a new species because at the moment of salvation we were picked up by God the Holy Spirit and entered into union with Jesus Christ, sharing in his characteristics of (Perfect) Righteousness, Eternal Life, Sonship, Heirship, Royalty, Priesthood, Election, Destiny and Sanctification.

To continue in 2 Cor. 5:17, let’s now look at the phrase “old [ancient] things have passed away.”

The word ‘old’ here is ἀρχαῖος (archaios) from which we get the English word ‘archaic’ meaning ‘really old’ or ‘from the beginning.’

The above mentioned false teaching (emphasizing human works) also wrongly teach that the phrase ‘old things have passed away’ refers to the sins and bad habits that the believer has learned to control (or at least hide from other people). However, the context of positional sanctification (the baptism of the Holy Spirit placing us into union with Jesus Christ) does not allow for this interpretation. The ‘archaic’ or ‘really old’ things that are passing away is the power of the sin nature (called the Old Man in Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9 because it is as old as the original sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden), and Adam’s Original Sin. These things ‘pass away’ (along with God’s condemnation) at the moment a person believes in Christ as Savior (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22).

We are positionally changed. We go from the position of a condemned sinner (“in Adam” : 1 Cor. 15:22) to one who is in eternal union with the Son of God, sitting at the right hand of God the Father – higher than the angels! (Heb. 1:3,4)

Characteristics of the baptism of the Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit is not an experience. In other words, the believer cannot see, feel, hear, smell or taste it. It is a spiritual ‘event’ that we can only know of through faith perception – the study of Bible doctrine.

- 1) The baptism of the Spirit is not emotional activity, feelings, or ecstasies.
- 2) It is not speaking in tongues.
- 3) The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an absolute act of God completed in a moment of time. It is not progressive, meaning it does not start at some time after salvation due to some behavioral change, neither does it improve or “get deeper” through the spiritual growth of the believer.
- 4) It is not related to human merit or works, but given in grace, because of faith in Christ alone. In contradistinction to the above (point no. 4), no amount of sinning or wrong-doing on account of the believer will nullify the Baptism of the Holy Spirit nor terminate his position in Christ.
- 5) The baptism of the Spirit is not a matter of the believer's volition. (*You* don’t decide whether you believe in, or want to receive the baptism of the Spirit or not! – it is given to you at the moment of faith in Christ.)
- 6) This is the Church Age believer’s identification with the strategic victory of Jesus Christ in the angelic conflict. (Col. 2:13-15)

- 7) Being "in Christ" means we are trophies of God's grace, to be presented by Christ to God the Father (Eph. 1:3-6; Col. 1:22).
- 8) This baptism/identification makes the believer a member and priest of the "Royal Family" of God forever. (1 Pet. 2:9)
- 9) This baptism provides equality in the Royal Family of God, not possible through physical birth. (Gal. 3:26, 27)
- 10) This baptism did not occur in any previous dispensation (Col. 1:25, 26), nor will it occur in any future dispensation. (For while the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was prophesized by Jesus Christ just before the beginning of the Church Age (John 14:16-20; Acts 1:5), there are no prophecies in scripture to tell us of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in future dispensations.)
- 11) This baptism unites all members of the Body of Christ. (Eph. 4:3-5)
- 12) This baptism interrupts the Dispensation of Israel and begins the Church Age. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:5; 2:3; 11:15-17)
- 13) No water is involved in this baptism.

The Analogy of Noah, the Ark, and the Flood

In 1 Pet. 3:18-21, Peter shows that Noah's experience of full deliverance in the ark was an analogy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"For Christ also once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, indeed being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit... ..when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared (in which a few, that is, eight souls escaped [the Greek word is διασώζω / *diasozo*, this word is never used in scripture for eternal salvation] by means of water); which represents to us [ἀντίτυπον / *antitupon*] the baptism that now saves [referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit]; not a putting away of the filth of the flesh [i.e. not water baptism], but the answer of a good conscience toward God [positive volition], by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;"

The Ark speaks of God's perfect provision for all who place their trust in Jesus Christ. Noah and his family were all believers and therefore placed in the ark and delivered from the judgment of the flood. Just as there was one door into the Ark through which Noah and his family entered to obtain salvation from the flood (judgment), so too does Jesus Christ represent the only "door" (John 10:7-9) into which we enter into eternal life - by means of union with Jesus Christ - and deliverance from eternal judgment.

Real Baptism No. 4

The Baptism of Fire

The baptism of the Spirit is connected with the first advent of Christ, Acts 1:5, where Jesus Christ told the disciples that "John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days" — ten days actually, the Day of Pentecost, the day the Church began.

The baptism of fire is connected with the second advent of Christ. When He returns to the earth He finds two kinds of people: believers and unbelievers. The unbelievers are cast off and put into fire and the believers go into the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

This is the real identification of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation with fire in Hades, taught in Mt 3:11,

"As for me, I baptize you with water because of repentance [a change of mind] , 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." (Matt. 3:16, see also Lk 3:16; Rev 19:11)

Note: Matthew 3:11 must be correctly translated as "I baptize you with water *because of a change of mind*", rather than "I baptize you with water *for repentance*" in order to avoid confusion and the false idea that water baptism leads to 'repentance' and thus salvation. (Not to mention that the phrase "I baptize you with water *to repentance*" or even "I baptize you with water *for repentance*" doesn't even make sense!) In Matthew 3:11 the Greek preposition "eis" is used with the accusative form of the noun "metanoeo" (which literally means "a change of mind" regarding the Gospel message, see also Mark 1:15). The preposition "eis" has many functions (for example: at; against; because; for; into; on; regarding; so; etc.,) so the context must be considered in order to correctly identify its function and correct usage. Other examples of "eis" used with the accusative noun as found in scripture:

Matt: 12:41 "...they [the people of Ninevah] repented ***because of the preaching of Jonah...***"

Romans 4:20 "...but ***because of the promise of God*** he [Abraham] did not waver in unbelief..."

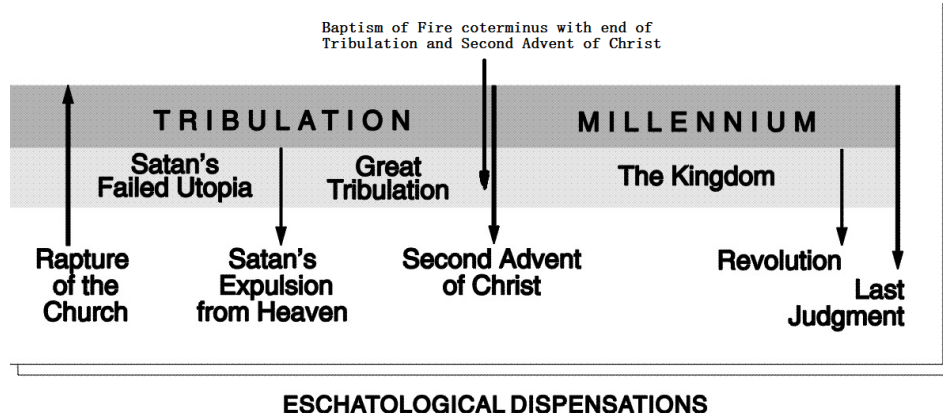
As an extra cautionary note, many 'scholars' who emphasize water baptism as a pre-requisite to salvation (having already rejected the fundamental principle of grace that salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone) rely heavily upon this verse to prove their argument, and therefore must go to great lengths trying to prove that 'because' is not a legitimate use of 'eis'.

The unbeliever is identified with fire forever. The Tribulational unbeliever is identified with the defeat of Satan. All unbelievers are removed from the earth for the start of the Millennium.

This fire speaks of divine judgment that destroys the chaff (unbelievers) in Israel. These unbelievers will be identified or immersed with fire or divine judgment at Christ's second coming. God removes them from the earth at that time (Matthew 24:37-41; cp. 25:31-46)

Three parables deal with the baptism of fire:

1. The wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30)
2. The good and bad fish (Matthew 13:47-51)
3. The wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)



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Ritual baptisms

There are three ritual baptisms in scripture, all involving water, as follows:

1. John's water baptism ritual of pre-Church Age believers
2. John's water baptism ritual of Jesus Christ
3. The water baptism ritual for believers of the Church Age

1. The water baptism of John

Scripture reference: Matthew 3:1-11; Mark 1:4; cp. John 1:25-28.

In the water-baptism rituals the water always represents the believer's identification with something else. In John's baptism, the believer's entrance down into the water represented identification with the coming Messiah and entry into the kingdom of God.

John's baptism took place during the age of Israel. However, after the day of Pentecost (marking the beginning of the Church Age) John's baptism was inadequate because it was limited to the time of Christ's earthly ministry. For that reason, Paul later re-baptized John's disciples to identify them with the new Church Age (Acts 18:25-26; 19:1-5).

2. The baptism of Jesus Christ

What does water mean for Jesus Christ? It represented the plan of God for His life – going to the cross, being identified with the sins of the world and being punished for them "...to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Coming up out of the water would represent His being resurrected into eternal glory, represented by the presence of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Jesus, and the confirmation from God the Father "...this is my Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16-17). That is the baptism of Jesus.

Jesus was not a sinner who had now received salvation and was witnessing to the fact. He was not identified with any kingdom because He is the kingdom. So we need to remember that the baptism of Jesus Christ is unique and the water represents the cross just as the water in John's baptism represents the kingdom.

3. Christian water baptism

This is the ritual testimony analogous to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). This ritual was essential for demonstrating to the believer of how the Holy Spirit had placed him into union in Jesus Christ, before this doctrine was recorded in writing and becoming part of the New Testament Canon. However, once the Canon was completed this ritual was no longer necessary since the explanation for the baptism of the Spirit is now in writing, providing far greater scope for understanding than what the water-baptism can.

The water baptism-ritual is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ only (Acts 8:37).

The water represents what the Baptism of the Spirit provides, namely, entrance into union with Jesus Christ and His body, as described in detail in the previous section on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism has a double identification (Rom. 6:3-13):

1. The believer going under the water is identified with Jesus Christ in His death and burial (retroactive positional truth), being free from sins.
2. The believer coming up out of the water is identified with Christ in His resurrection, ascension, and session (current positional truth), walking in newness of life and producing divine good.

There are only two ritual ordinances in the Church Age:

- a. Water baptism – performed only once and representing the believer’s salvation.
- b. Communion – performed repeatedly in the church as a memorial service to our Lord’s life and work on the Cross (1 Cor. 11:23-27)

Paul and Peter’s later views on water baptism

The majority of verses regarding Church Age believers being baptized in water are found in the book of Acts. These verses provide accounts of the early years of the Church Age, before there was any scripture written teaching about the one true baptism – i.e. identification with the Lord Jesus Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Paul tells the Corinthians he stopped using water baptism because misunderstandings about its use and purpose was dividing believers, Acts 2:38, 8:36-38, 16:15,33; 1 Cor 1:11-17. So before Rom. 6:3-4 and 1 Cor. 12 were written to explain the baptism of the Spirit and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, water baptism was used to represent what had happened at salvation to those who did not yet have the completed Canon. Paul knew the doctrine and saw that teaching the doctrine of identification (referring to the baptism of

the Holy Spirit) was more instructive than the water baptism ritual which was easily misunderstood.

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.” (1 Cor. 1:17)

Later, Peter realizes that many believers place too much importance on the water ritual and so says that water ritual is nothing more than a bath (English Bibles say, 'putting away of the filth' - 1 Peter 3:21). Ritual without knowing the reality behind the ritual is meaningless.

Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

There are at least four reasons why we must answer this question "No!"

Theological Reason

Salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ alone. Thus, water baptism does not save anyone, or help to save anyone. Man can do nothing by way of good works to acquire or maintain eternal life (Romans 4:4-5; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

Scriptural Reasons

Acts 8:12-13. "When they believed [i.e., 'after' they believed] . . . they were baptized." The sequence is first faith, which saved, then water baptism.

Acts 10:44-48. The sequence is clear: Peter preached, the Holy Spirit fell on those who heard the word (and believed) "then Peter answered . . . and ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Note that he ordered or commanded, thus did not make water baptism optional for those who had believed.

Acts 9:17-18; 22:6-16, esp. 16. The sequence of events is (a) Paul was born-again in Damascus following a challenge from Ananias (Acts 22:16), (b) the Holy Spirit then filled him (Acts 9:17), and (c) finally Ananias baptized Paul with water (Acts 9:18; 22:16).

1. Romans 4:1-4, 10-11. This passage gives us an extraordinary illustration of how ritual follows inner spiritual reality. Abraham first believed then God imputed righteousness to Abraham while he was still uncircumcised. Then he was circumcised. In fact, the Lord did not have Abraham circumcised until 25 years after he was declared righteous (cp. Hebrews 11:8; Acts 7:2-4 and Genesis 12:1-3 with 17:9-19).

Logical Reason

What about those too sick to baptize? Or a dying man who believes on the street following a fatal car accident? What about the repentant thief on the cross next to Christ who put his faith in Him (Luke 23:29-43)? Also Scripture declares Zaccheus (Luke 19:9) and Cornelius (Acts 10:7) to be saved before they were baptized.

What Water Baptism Does Not Do:

It does not contribute to our salvation. God gives each new convert at least 40 things (39 Irrevocable Absolutes, and one revocable asset) at the moment of salvation that place him in perfect and eternal relationship to God (Hebrews 10:14). One cannot improve upon such perfection, with or without water.

Water Baptism (or any other ritual) does not make one more spiritual. A Christian achieves spiritual status only through walking by means of the Holy Spirit and through growth in God's Word, not through water.

Water baptism has no magic in it and imparts no mystical or spiritual potential. It confers no grace to those who are baptized, that is, it does not guarantee to them heaven, spiritual success, forgiveness, nor secure the removal of sin, whether the sin nature, imputed sin, or personal sin. Water baptism is a picture or symbol of an already existing inner reality.

CONCLUSION

There is only one baptism necessary for salvation, and that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul emphasizes this in Eph. 4:5 when he says, 'There is ONE baptism (identification).' This is given by the Holy Spirit at the moment that a person believes in Christ as his personal savior (the moment of faith alone, in Christ alone), NOT at the time they decide to love God, or make a promise to God to be a good Christian, or make a public confession of faith in Christ at the front of a church meeting, nor even when they get baptized in water. The water baptism was a ritual used to TEACH about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (It should also be noted that while many claim that even if baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is still a necessary requirement as a 'public showing of faith.' However, there is not one verse in scripture to prove this.)

If people have believed in Christ (made a decision that He is indeed their Savior) then they have already had the true baptism (identification into union with Jesus Christ. Rom 6:3-4, 1 Cor. 12:13 and many other verses.) If they understand that is what has happened then they can be water baptized (ritual only) as a symbolic gesture to themselves and others who witness the ritual. But in the eyes of God they are already perfect because they are in union with Christ already.

"Truly, truly, I say unto you, He that *believes on me* has everlasting life." (John 6:47)

Recommended Websites:

www.rbthieme.org www.berachah.org www.maxklein.org www.ibdoctrines.com

(With the exception of the 'The Seven Baptisms' chart, all diagrams are © R.B.Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries.)

THE SEVEN BAPTISMS

Recipient(s) of the Baptism / Identification Process	Baptized/ Identified With/ Entered into Union With	Category of Baptism	Purpose	Key Verses
Jews of the Exodus/ the mixed multitude	Moses	Real	Deliverance from the Pharaoh ; An analogy of baptism/identification into God's plan at salvation.	1 Cor. 10:2-4; Ex. 14:10-31; Heb. 11:27,29
Humanity of Jesus Christ	'The cup' of judgment, representing the sins of the world imputed to Jesus Christ.	Real	Receiving the imputation and subsequent punishment for sins of the world.	Matt.20:22; 26:39, 42; Mar. 10:38, 39a; Luk. 12:49, 50
Church Age Believers	Jesus Christ	Real	Eternal union with Jesus Christ. Identification with His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross; His many of His attributes.	1 Cor.12:13; Gal. 3:26-28; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:12; Eph. 2:4-6; 4:4-5; Rom. 6:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17
Unbelievers at end of Tribulation	Fire (physical death by fire)	Real	Removes the unbeliever from the earth. Millennial Kingdom must begin with believers only.	Matt. 3:16; 24:37-41; 25:31-46; Lk. 3:16; Rev 19:11
Believers in the time of Age of Israel/Hypostatic Union	Symbolically identified with the Kingdom of God	Ritual (water)	To teach that belief in the coming Messiah provides entry in the Kingdom of God.	Matt. 3:1-11; Mark 1:4; Jn.1:25-28
Jesus Christ	Symbolically identified with the Salvation Plan of God: substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross, burial, and resurrection.	Ritual (water)	Jesus demonstrating His willingness to comply with the Father's plan. God the Father and the Holy Spirit manifest their satisfaction.	Matt. 3:15-17
Church Age Believers	Symbolically identified with Christ, his saving work, death, burial (entering the water), resurrection and ascension, eternal union with Him (exiting the water into 'newness of life)	Ritual (water)	A teaching ritual and testimony specifically for Church Age, pre-Canon, believers in Christ. Still used today, however much controversy exists within the Church (and other religious organizations) regarding its significance and proper function.	Acts 2:38,41; 8:35-38, 16:15,33; 1 Cor. 1:11-17