

RESULTS OF COMPUTER WORD SEARCH IN THE NIV NEW TESTAMENT

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BAPTIZE

- ❑ Matt 3:11 (NIV) "I **baptize** you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- ❑ Mark 1:8 I **baptize** you with water, but he will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit."
- ❑ Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I **baptize** you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- ❑ John 1:25 questioned him, "Why then do you **baptize** if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"
- ❑ John 1:26 "I **baptize** with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know.
- ❑ John 1:33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to **baptize** with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will **baptize** with the Holy Spirit.'
- ❑ 1 Cor 1:14 I am thankful that I did not **baptize** any of you except Crispus and Gaius,
- ❑ 1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to **baptize**, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

BAPTIZING

- ❑ Matt 3:7 (NIV) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was **baptizing**, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"
- ❑ Matt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- ❑ Mark 1:4 And so John came, **baptizing** in the desert region and preaching a **baptism** of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- ❑ John 1:28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was **baptizing**.
- ❑ John 1:31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came **baptizing** with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."
- ❑ John 3:23 Now John also was **baptizing** at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be **baptized**.
- ❑ John 3:26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan--the one you testified about--well, he is **baptizing**, and everyone is going to him."
- ❑ John 4:1 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and **baptizing** more disciples than John,
- ❑ John 10:40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been **baptizing** in the early days.

BAPTIZED

- ❑ Matt 3:6 (NIV) Confessing their sins, they were **baptized** by him in the Jordan River.
- ❑ Matt 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be **baptized** by John.
- ❑ Matt. 3:14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be **baptized** by you, and do you come to me?"
- ❑ Matt 3:16 As soon as Jesus was **baptized**, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.
- ❑ Mark 1:5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were **baptized** by him in the Jordan River.
- ❑ Mark 1:9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was **baptized** by John in the Jordan.
- ❑ Mark 10:38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I am **baptized** with?"
- ❑ Mark 10:39 "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be **baptized** with the **baptism** I am **baptized** with,
- ❑ Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is **baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
- ❑ Luke 3:7 John said to the crowds coming out to be **baptized** by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"
- ❑ Luke 3:12 Tax collectors also came to be **baptized**. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"
- ❑ Luke 3:21 When all the people were being **baptized**, Jesus was **baptized** too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened
- ❑ Luke 7:29 (All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been **baptized** by John.
- ❑ Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been **baptized** by John.)
- ❑ John 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and **baptized**.
- ❑ John 3:23 Now John also was **baptizing** at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be **baptized**.
- ❑ John 4:2 although in fact it was not Jesus who **baptized**, but his disciples. { continued -----> }

"BAPTIZED" ... (CONTINUED) ...

- ❑ Acts 1:5 For John **baptized** with water, but in a few days you will be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit."
- ❑ Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- ❑ Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were **baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.
- ❑ Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women.
- ❑ 13 Simon himself believed and was **baptized**. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.
- ❑ Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been **baptized** into the name of the Lord Jesus.
- ❑ Acts 8:36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be **baptized**?"
- ❑ Acts 8:38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip **baptized** him.
- ❑ Acts 9:18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was **baptized**,
- ❑ Acts 10:47 "Can anyone keep these people from being **baptized** with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."
- ❑ 48 So he ordered that they be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.
- ❑ Acts 11:16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: `John **baptized** with water, but you will be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit.'
- ❑ Acts 16:15 When she and the members of her household were **baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.
- ❑ Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were **baptized**.
- ❑ Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were **baptized**.
- ❑ Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were **baptized** into the name of the Lord Jesus.
- ❑ Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be **baptized** and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'
- ❑ Rom. 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death?
- ❑ 1Cor 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you **baptized** into the name of Paul?
- ❑ 1Cor 1:15 so no one can say that you were **baptized** into my name.
- ❑ 1 Cor. 1:16 (Yes, I also **baptized** the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I **baptized** anyone else.)
- ❑ 1Cor 10:2 They were all **baptized** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.
- ❑ 1Cor 12:13 For we were all **baptized** by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
- ❑ 1Cor 15:29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are **baptized** for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people **baptized** for them?
- ❑ Gala 3:27 for all of you who were **baptized** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

BAPTISM

- ❑ Matt 21:25 (NIV) John's **baptism**--where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'"
- ❑ Mark 1:4 And so John came, **baptizing** in the desert region and preaching a **baptism** of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- ❑ Mark 10:38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I am **baptized** with?" 39 "We can," they answered.
- ❑ Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be **baptized** with the **baptism** I am **baptized** with,
- ❑ Mark 11:30 John's **baptism**--was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!"
- ❑ Luke 3:3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a **baptism** of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- ❑ Luke 12:50 But I have a **baptism** to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!
- ❑ Luke 20:4 John's **baptism**--was it from heaven, or from men?"
- ❑ Acts 1:22 beginning from John's **baptism** to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."
- ❑ Acts 10:37 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the **baptism** that John preached--
- ❑ Acts 13:24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and **baptism** to all the people of Israel.
- ❑ Acts 18:25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the **baptism** of John.
- ❑ Acts 19:3 So Paul asked, "Then what **baptism** did you receive?" "John's **baptism**," they replied.
- ❑ Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John's **baptism** was a **baptism** of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."
- ❑ Rom. 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through **baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
- ❑ Eph. 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one **baptism**;
- ❑ Col. 2:12 having been buried with him in **baptism** and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.
- ❑ 1Pet 3:21 and this water symbolizes **baptism** that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

BAPTISM--A BRIEF STUDY

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Baptism is one of those subjects loaded with tension, and fraught with controversy. Both the tension and controversy may spring more from church history, tradition, and denominational dogma than from actual Biblical terminology and theology.

A simple study of vocabulary words examined in their historical, literary and cultural context, combined with a context-sensitive exegesis of the Biblical texts in which the terms are found will go a long way toward enabling the sincere seeker of truth to establish the facts and draw pertinent, and accurate conclusions. As is the case with all too many theological controversies, opinions tend to be formed, articulated, and defended before any such study is performed. The only fruit of this kind of shoddy scholarship is ignorance, polarization,

defensiveness, and slavish adherence to tradition or sectarian, denominational dogma.

I strongly recommend to anyone who wants to know what God teaches about baptism--begin with the scriptures in their raw form--no commentaries, no theological experts or ministerial advisors standing over your shoulder. Simply one person, digging into one Bible, asking one God to grant the one meaning intended by the author of the text at hand. That is why I have preceded this brief study with a listing of the relevant scriptures in which **bapt-** is found. I recommend these scriptures be studied **IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONTEXTS** before continuing further with the brief overview that follows.

I. MODE (Is Baptism an immersion, pouring, or sprinkling...or does it matter?)

A. DEFINITIONS OF THE ORIGINAL GREEK WORDS

1. A check of any of the authoritative works on the original Greek word-group used in the New Testament is a good starting point. Greek lexicographers (authors of dictionaries) are unanimously agreed that the verb βαπτίζω (baptizo) means "to dip, plunge, or immerse."

a. This is supported by A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, by Walter Bauer, translated and adapted by William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich; 1974. This massive work is the "Webster's Unabridged" of Greek lexica (dictionaries); in other words, it is the standard scholarly reference. On page 131 βαπτίζω (baptizo) is defined as "dip, immerse."

b. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, by Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., p. 94:
βαπτίζω: "1) to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge . . . 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging . . ."

c. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. by Colin Brown, Zondervan, 1975.
"...baptizo is an intensive form of bapto and means (a) dip, and (b) cause to perish (as drowning a man or sinking a ship)", vol. 1, p. 144. The noun "baptismos, dipping immersion. . ."

d. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, Eerdmans, 1964; vol. 1, p. 530:
"The intens. βαπτίζω [baptizo] occurs in the sense of 'to immerse' (trans.) from the time of Hippocrates, in Plato and esp. in later writers." . . . "The sense of 'to bathe' or 'to wash' is only occasionally found in Hellenism, . . . The idea of going under or perishing is nearer the general usage."

e. All of these works are representative of scholarship coming from a broad, nearly universal, sweep of denominational backgrounds.

f. T. J. Conant, The Meaning and Purpose of Baptizein, Kregel, 1977 reprint of 1864). This is a uniquely helpful book which surveys the use of **bapt-** in its historical and cultural context

through a detailed analysis of the ancient documents both secular and sacred. Throughout this research into primary sources, Conant demonstrates that the **bapt-** word group always signifies an immersion.

2. The Greek words are onomatopoeic--they make the sound they define. The root, "**bapt**", (pronounced like "bopped") is similar to the American cartoonists' use of the coined word, "kerplunk." It is the sound a large object (e.g., a rock) makes when it falls into water.

3. The Greeks possessed vocabulary words for sprinkling (ραντίζω = rantizo: verb and ραντισμος = rantismos: noun) and for pouring (εκχεω = ekcheo). Both of these words are used in the New Testament, and in no case are they translated by our English word, baptize (meaning "immerse"). The reason for this is obvious. Sprinkling and pouring are not "immersion;" and sprinkling and pouring therefore are not "baptism."

4. One interesting technical grammatical observation may be more difficult to comprehend in English than Greek.

a. In immersion, the person is the (direct) object of the action, and the water is the medium into which the action is performed (indirect object).
• Therefore, it is, "I baptize (immerse) YOU, IN water.

b. In the case of both sprinkling and pouring, the water is the object of the action, and the person is the indirect object.
• "I sprinkle/pour WATER, ON (or onto) you.

In this case what is being "**baptized**" (if baptizo means sprinkle/pour) is not the person, but the water.

c. Literally, "sprinkling" or "pouring" a PERSON requires the outrageous image of grinding the person into pieces so he or she can be "sprinkled" or "poured." The contexts in which the term "baptize" occurs grammatically only make sense when immersion is understood.

5. Allow me to suggest an interesting, and potentially revealing, exercise. Read every text in which the words “baptize” and “baptism” occur. At each reading substitute the word “sprinkle/ing”, then “pour/ing”, then “immerse/ion/ing” for the word “baptize/ism”. See which reading makes the most sense in its context.

6. Some significant quotations from important scholars:

a. Luther wrote, “if you consider what baptism signifies, you will see that the same thing [immersion] is required. For this signifies, that the old man, and our sinful nature, which consists of flesh and blood, is all submerged by divine grace, as we shall more fully show. The mode of baptizing ought, therefore, to correspond to the signification of baptism, so as to set forth a sure and full sign of it” (De Sacram. Bapt., Op. Tom. I. Fol. 72, as quoted by T.J. Conant, in The Meaning and Use of Baptizein (Kregel, 1977), pp.189-190.

b. Luther again in On the Sacrament of Baptism (at the beginning). “First, the name baptism is Greek; in Latin it can be rendered immersion, when we immerse any thing into water, that it may be all covered with water. And although that custom has now grown out of use with most persons (nor do they wholly submerge children, but only pour a little water), yet they ought to be entirely immersed, and immediately drawn out. For this the etymology of the name seems to demand.” (cf T. J. Conant, p. 181)

c. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book IV, Ch. 15, Sect. 19, Para. 3, “But whether the person being baptized should be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, whether he should only be sprinkled with poured water-- these details are of no importance but ought to be optional to churches according to the diversity of countries. Yet the word “baptize” means to immerse, and it is clear that the rite of immersion was observed in the ancient church.” (Westminster Press, 1960 by W. L. Jenkins, vol. 2, p. 1322). Note: it is interesting that Calvin admits to the antiquity, authenticity and originality of immersion, but formulates his own practice based on opinion rather than Biblical data.

d. Coneybeare and Howson (Church of England), The Life and Epistles of Paul, vol. 1, p. 471 (Am. ed., p. 439). “It is needless to add, that baptism was . . . administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be a subject of regret, that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism...has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of scripture.” (cf. T. J. Conant, p. 184)

e. Maldonatus (Catholic), Commentary on the Gospels, Matt. 20:22 . . . “For in Greek, to be baptized is the same as to be submerged.” -- Luke, 12:50. “To be baptized, therefore, which properly is to be submerged in water, is put for to suffer and to die, and baptism for affliction, for suffering, for death.” (cf. T. J. Conant, p. 178)

B. BIBLICAL IMAGERY

The following Biblical images paint a very graphic picture of baptism as an immersion:

1. John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan river (Matt. 3:6, 13; Mark 1:5, 9; Luke 3:3; John 1:28). The choice of a river would certainly strongly suggest that baptism is something John did in the context of a larger body of water than a bowl or cup.

- Note: it is also significant that the text states that John was baptizing **IN** the Jordan. It is very descriptive of the picture painted by immersion.

2. John the Baptist evidently chose his baptism location based on the availability of “plenty of water” (John 3:23). In this text there is a cause/effect relationship between the availability of plenty of water and the baptismal location.

3. Jesus, as soon as he was baptized, “came up out of the water” (Matt. 3:16). Arising from water only makes sense in the context of the act of immersion.

4. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch “came to some water” and, they both “went down into the water” (Acts 8:38). Only immersion paints this picture.

5. Paul’s baptism required him to “get up” from his sedentary state (Acts 9:18; 22:16). Only immersion would require the subject to change physical locations.

6. Paul taught that baptism is a “burial”

a. In Romans 6:4 Paul writes that “. . . we were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

b. In Colossians 2:12 Paul virtually repeats this idea . . . “having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

c. Only immersion graphically pictures the complete burial of a body.

7. One further image which suggests a complete engulfing is Galatians 3:27, where Paul compares baptism with clothing oneself with Christ.

• QUESTIONS?

BAPTISM--A BRIEF STUDY

Part Two

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II. PREREQUISITES FOR BAPTISM

In order to determine who is, and who is not, a proper recipient of baptism it is crucial to see what scripture says. The prerequisites presented are striking and revealing.

1. Hear/receive the message

- a. Acts 2:41 "Those who **accepted his message** were baptized..."
- b. Acts 8:12 "...when they believed Philip **as he preached the good news**...they were baptized..."
- c. Acts 19:5 "**On hearing this**, they were baptized..."

2. Faith/believe

- a. Mark 16:16 "**He who believes** and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." This passage obviously ties faith to baptism as a prerequisite. However, some have objected that, since the Jesus states that lack of faith condemns, but he does not say that lack of baptism condemns, therefore baptism must not be important. Quite the contrary. The answer to this objection is obvious. Baptism erupts from faith. Without faith, baptism would make no sense. There is no need for Jesus to say "He who is not baptized will be condemned" because the lack of faith by itself is damning. This is made clear by Heb. 11:6..."Without faith it is impossible to please God."

b. Acts 8:12

c. Acts 8:13 "Simon himself **believed** and was baptized."

d. Acts 18:8 "Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household **believed in the Lord**; and many of the Corinthians who heard him **believed** and were baptized."

3. Repentance

a. Acts 2:38 "**Repent** and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ..."

b. John's baptism

4. Confession

a. Matt. 3:6 and Mark 1:5 (of John's baptism, not Christian baptism, but it may well set the tone)

b. Rom. 10:8-13

III. INFANT BAPTISM

A. The Problem of the Biblical Prerequisites for Baptism

1. The prerequisites for baptism, and others listed elsewhere in scripture for salvation, contend against infants, in their non-sentient developmental state, as proper recipients of baptism.
2. If hearing/accepting the gospel, believing, repenting, and confessing are all genuinely Biblical prerequisites for baptism, then it would seem that so-called "infant baptism" is disallowed.

B. Why Is Infant Baptism Practiced?

1. Construed as a NT equivalent of OT circumcision (cf. Col. 2:11-12; Rom. 2:28-29)
2. Original Sin
Historically, infant baptism probably developed as a method of dealing with "original sin." This is the case within both Roman Catholicism and Calvinism.

C. The Silence of Scripture Concerning Infant Baptism

1. The most telling argument against infant baptism is the complete absence of any clear example of one in the New Testament.

2. Franz Leenhardt, a respected and prominent Reformed (Calvinist) scholar, writes, in opposition to the his own church's traditional practice: "It is generally agreed by defenders of infant baptism that the New Testament does not offer us explicit teachings capable of settling the problem of infant baptism . . . It is the evidence of the facts which lead to this established position; *only the fanatics will contest it!* . . . Why will people constantly take up arguments which have already been shown a hundred times to be untenable?" (quoted by G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, Eerdmans, 1962; p. 307)
3. Karl Barth writes, "from the standpoint of a doctrine of baptism, infant baptism can hardly be preserved without exegetical and practical artifices and sophisms—the proof to the contrary has yet to be supplied! One wants to preserve it only if one is resolved to do so on grounds which lie outside the Biblical passages on baptism and outside the thing in itself." (quoted by Beasley-Murray, p. 308).
4. Anglican scholars, in *Baptism and Confirmation*, 1959, p. x, 34—"It is clear that the doctrine of baptism in the New Testament is stated in relation to the baptism of adults, as was also the case (with two or three exceptions) in the writers of the first three centuries. In every recorded case of baptism in the New Testament, the Gospel has been heard and accepted, and the condition of faith (and presumably of repentance) has been consciously fulfilled prior to the reception of the Sacrament. In the New Testament Adult Baptism is the norm, and it is only in the light of this fact that the doctrine and practice of Baptism can be understood." (quoted by Beasley-Murray, p. 310).

D. "Household Baptisms"

1. One objection often offered against adult-only baptism in favor of infant baptism is the occurrence of the household baptisms found in Acts.
2. Biblical references to household baptism:
 - a. Cornelius—Acts 11:14
 - b. Lydia—Acts 16:15
 - c. Philippian Jailor—Acts 16:33
 - d. Crispus—Acts 18:8
 - e. House of Stephanus—1 Cor. 1:16
 - f. House of Onesiphorus—2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19
3. Logical Challenges to Infant Baptism Within the Texts
 - a. Cornelius' household in Acts 10-11
 - The Holy Spirit fell on **all** who heard the word (v. 45)
 - They **all** spoke in tongues
 - They **all** praised God
 - b. The Philippian Jailor in Acts 16
 - Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord to him and to **all** the others in his house." (v. 32)
 - The "**whole family** was filled with joy" (v. 34)
 - The **whole family** was filled with joy because **they** had come to believe in God.

c. Crispus, in Acts 18

- His entire household believed in the Lord (v. 8)
- Many of the Corinthians who HEARD him BELIEVED and were baptized. (v. 8)

d. Also note Paul's comment about the household of Stephanus in 1 Cor. 16:15... who "devoted themselves to service (ministry for) of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it." The infants in Stephanus' house must have been quite precocious to have been involved in these activities (cf. Beasley-Murray, p. 316)

4. The language is phenomenological. It refers, by assumption, only to sentient members of the household.
5. It is much like saying to your best friend, "My family went for a walk this evening." If one family member is a newborn, one is eleven months old, and one is a 9-year-old paraplegic confined to a wheelchair, the only ones who walked were the parents. One child was pushed (or pushed himself) in a wheel chair, and the other two were pushed in a stroller or carried. It does not make the original statement false, as if you were lying to your friend.

The statement is qualified automatically by logical assumptions. Your friend will follow the assumptions and will not even question the statement. And certainly, your friend will not leap to the conclusion that all five members of the family actually "walked."

IV. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

A. Biblical Imagery Graphically Portraying the Meaning of Baptism

- A clothing (Gal. 3:27)
- A circumcision (Col. 2)
- A birth or "rebirth" (Jn. 3)
- Acknowledgment of the truth of God's way (Luke 7:29)
- Forgiveness of sin--Acts 2:38, Mark 1:4
- Cleansing from sins-- Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11
- Union with Christ—Gal. 3:27
- Clothed with Christ—Gal. 3:27
- Union with Christ in his death and resurrection—Rom. 6:3ff; Col. 2:11f
- Saves (within context) 1 Pet. 3:21
- "Release from sin's power, as well as guilt, and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer"—Rom. 6:1-11 (cf. Beasley-Murray, p. 264)
- Participation in Christ's sonship—Gal. 3:26f

- Consecration to God—1 Cor. 6:11
- Membership in the Church, the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-29
- Possession of the Holy Spirit—Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:13
- New life in the Spirit, i.e., regeneration—Titus 3:5; John 3:5
- "Grace to live according to the will of God"—Rom. 6:1ff; Col. 3:1ff (cf. Beasley-Murray, p. 264)
- "Deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world"—Col. 1:13 (cf. Beasley-Murray, p. 264)
- Inheritance of the Kingdom of God—Jn. 3:5
- Pledge of the resurrection of the body—Eph. 1:13f, 4:30

B. Symbolic vs. Efficacious ("saving power")

1. Is baptism

- a. "an **outward sign** of an inward grace", (Symbolic) or
- b. "an **actual means** of grace" (efficacious)?

2. Consider 1 Pet. 3:21, where baptism is the "real" and the water of the Noahic flood is the symbolic. Baptism is commonly referred to as "an outward sign of an inward grace." In this terminology baptism is always and only merely a symbol of a spiritual reality. However, Scripture does provide examples of obedience as efficacious. For example, Naaman in 2 Kings 5.

C. Is Baptism Essential? Or is it Optional?

1. This is a question often raised in contemporary discussions and debates about baptism. However, it is a question never entertained in scripture, and asking it would likely have caused a confused response from any first century Christian.
2. What is commanded for salvation? Believe (faith) Repent, Confess. Why do we have no problem with these three, but we balk at baptism, in spite of the fact that on several occasions in the New Testament it is posed as a command?

D. Is Baptism a Work?

1. Many fear that baptism is an attempt at salvation by works-righteousness vs. the righteousness that comes by faith.
2. Is baptism a “work?” No.
 - a. In baptism, the person being baptized is dead—a corpse, a cadaver.
 - b. All indications of the Biblical significance of baptism point to the fact that the person baptized is a passive recipient of the action performed by
 - A human agent (the person doing the baptizing) and
 - A divine agent (God).

E. The Great Commission causes problems for those who do not include baptism as a part of their plan of salvation.

1. The Great Commission includes an injunction to baptize. Why? If Jesus is the author of grace, is he therefore theologically and pragmatically schizophrenic?
2. If your attempt to fulfill the Great Commission does not include baptism, is it really the Great Commission you are honoring?

F. **Conclusion:** Joseph Henry Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 95, “baptism, . . . according to the view of the apostles, is a rite of sacred immersion, commanded by Christ, by which men confessing their sins and professing their faith in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, come into the fellowship of Christ and the church (1 Cor. 12:13), and are made partakers of eternal salvation.”

G. QUESTIONS????

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Baptism: A Biblical Study, Jack Cottrell; Joplin, College Press; 1989.
Solid Biblical exegesis of key texts.

Baptism and the Remission of Sins: An Historical Perspective, ed. David W. Fletcher; Joplin, College Press; 1990.
Good overview of historical and ideological issues.

Baptism in the New Testament, G. R. Beasley-Murray; Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans; 1973.
The standard scholarly work on the subject, and one of the most recent.

Baptism: The Believer's Wedding Ceremony, F. LaGard Smith; Cincinnati, Standard Publishing; 1989.
Stimulating analogical study by a Pepperdine University Law professor.

The Meaning and Use of Baptizein, T. J. Conant; New York, American Bible Union; 1864. Reprint ed, 1977 by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids.
A one-of-a-kind book. Conant deals with texts of antiquities—original documents from the era of Christ.

The Water that Divides: The Baptism Debate, Donald Bridge and David Phipers; Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press; 1977.
Presents some “big-picture” issues regarding adult vs. infant baptism. Helpful in setting up a debate in your mind, but may raise more questions than answers. In attempting to offend no one, it may offend everyone.