



BELIEVERS' BAPTISM

1. There are seven baptisms in the Bible: three are wet (or ritual) and four are dry (or real).
 - a. Real Baptisms
 - (1) baptism into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2)
 - (2) baptism with fire (Matt. 3:11–12; Luke 3:16–17)
 - (3) baptism of the cross (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50)
 - (4) baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Cor. 12:13).
 - b. Ritual Baptisms
 - (1) John's baptism (Matt. 3:5–11; Mark 1:4–8; Luke 3:3–17; John 1:25–34; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:1–7)
 - (2) baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22)
 - (3) believers' (Christian) baptism (Acts 8:36–39; 10:47–48)
2. Believers' baptism is commanded by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19).
3. Believers' baptism commemorates Spirit baptism (Acts 10:47; cf. 11:16). Water baptism is a ritual and memorial; Spirit baptism is the reality. Both sacraments, communion and baptism, are memorial ceremonies.
4. There is only one real baptism in the Church Age (Eph. 4:4–5).
5. The mode of baptism is immersion (not pouring or sprinkling).
 - a. *supported by archaeological and Mishnaic evidence*: complete immersion was required in ritual immersion baths (called *miqva'ot*). Jews immersed themselves in a *miqveh* in front of witnesses for ritual purification (*Miqva'ot* 2:1,2; 7:6; *Yebamot* 46b).
 - b. *supported by typology*: water completely surrounds the particles of flour to form dough for the wave loaves offering (Lev. 23:17).
 - c. *supported by the meaning and use of the Greek word baptizo*: 'to immerse, immerge, submerge, dip, plunge, inbathe, overwhelm.'
 - d. *supported by analogy*: unbelievers are totally immersed in Hades and in the Lake of Fire (compare Matt. 3:11–12 with 13:42 and Rev. 19:20).
6. The mode of baptism should fit the reality.
 - a. The choice is between immersion, affusion (pouring water from a container), and aspersion (sprinkling).
 - b. Water is often a symbol of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. In Bible times the baptizer may have stood on dry ground while believers immersed themselves in water (the earliest picture of a baptism is on a fresco in a 2nd century A.D. catacomb near Rome; but compare Acts 8:38–39).
 - d. The Spirit does the work of cleansing and making you part of the body of Christ.
7. Water baptism represents the work of the Holy Spirit uniting believers to the body of Christ (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13). The adjective *symphutos* in Romans 6:5 means 'grown together' or 'united,' as wounds or broken bones grow together to unite.
 - a. It is a memorial of a past spiritual reality (like the Lord's Supper).
 - b. It is an initiation rite or ceremony portraying entrance into the body of Christ.
 - c. It is a visible reenactment of an invisible reality.
 - d. It is a picture of positional truth—union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–11).
 - e. It should take place only once in the life of every believer (no redunkings).
 - f. It is valid only if preceded by Spirit baptism.
 - g. It may take place immediately after salvation (Acts 8:26–39).
 - h. It should follow salvation as soon as possible to help make unseen spiritual realities real for new converts.
 - i. It may not be denied to true believers (Acts 10:47).
8. The baptismal formula indicates the authority by which water baptism is performed (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; cf. 1 Cor. 1:13, 15). The baptizer has delegated authority to baptize in Jesus' name.
9. Believers' baptism is the sign of the New Covenant (cf. Col. 2:11–12).