

There Is One Baptism

There is one baptism (Eph. 4:5). The scriptures speak of a number of different baptisms. There was the baptism of Israel unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1f). Then John the Baptist spoke of the Messiah who was to come and baptize in the Holy Spirit and Fire (Matt. 3:11). Jesus called his being overwhelmed in suffering, "baptism" (Matt. 20:22). All these are figurative uses of the word "baptism." The Bible also speaks of the "baptism of John" and the "baptism of the great commission," both literal baptisms in water (Matt. 28:18f; Acts 19:3).

There is only one baptism today. It is not Holy Ghost baptism. Joel predicted: "It shall be in the last days...I will pour forth my spirit upon all flesh..." (Joel 2:28). When the apostles, representing the Jews, were baptized in the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, and Cornelius, representing the gentiles were baptized in the Holy Ghost, "all flesh" had had God's Spirit poured out upon them (Acts 2; 10). Neither is fire baptism the one baptism of Ephesians. 4:5. Fire baptism (as the context in Matthew 3:11f clearly shows) is punishment which all disobedient persons will receive at the judgment day (2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 20:15). The one baptism of our study is not John's baptism. Some had been baptized in John's baptism in Ephesus but were required to be rebaptized. The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the baptism of the great commission. That baptism is water.

The baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is one in action. The action of baptism is immersion. This is established upon three clearly stated principles.

First. The meaning of the word baptism is to "dip, plunge, submerge." Baptism is not a translated word, it is rather a transliterated word: a Greek word made into an English one. The Greek word is baptizo which was made into the English word "baptize." Whatever the word mean when Jesus commanded it, that is what the word means now.

Second. The description of the action in baptism is set forth in many places. Where ever the act of baptism is described, it is always pictured as going down into the water, then a coming up out of the water. You can see this pictured in both the baptisms of Jesus and the Eunuch (Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:38f).

Third. Baptism is called a burial. "We are buried with him by baptism into death..." "having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also

raised with him through faith in the working of God..." (Rom. 6:3f; Col. 2:12). Neither sprinkling nor pouring qualify to be called a "burial"; only immersion fits that quality.

The penitent believer is the subject of the action in baptism, not the object of the action of baptism. Various passages show this clearly. See Matthew 28:18; Acts 8:38, etc. It is only in immersion that the believer is the subject of the action, he is immersed into water. In both sprinkling and pouring, the person is the object of the action: water is sprinkled or poured upon him. He is altogether passive, not active in the action.

There is one baptism in action. Neither sprinkling nor pouring satisfy what the Lord commanded. Jesus literally said "Go therefore and teach all nations, immersing them..." "that that believeth and is immersed shall be saved" (Matt. 28:18; Mk. 16:16). The apostles literally said, "Repent ye and be immersed everyone of you..." (Acts 2:38). Paul was actually told "and now why tarriest thou? Arise and be immersed..." (Acts 22:16). Those who have been sprinkled have not been baptized. Jesus commanded immersion, not sprinkling. Those who are sprinkled are not obeying the commandment of Christ. Rather, they are obeying the commandment of men. Please read Matthew 15:9.

Jim McDonald