

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES
#3–BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

Introduction

In this distinctive there are actually four distinctives involved in which we differ from what many Churches practice concerning baptism.

- 1. The Distinctive Of Who Baptism Is For—Only Believers Are To Be Baptized!**
 - a. This excludes unbelievers.
 - b. This excludes infants who neither believe or disbelieve.
- 2. The Distinctive Of How Baptism Is Administered—Baptism Is To Be By Immersion Rather Than By Sprinkling Or Pouring!**
- 3. The Distinctive Of What Baptism Is For—Baptism Is Not A Step In Receiving Christ But Rather A Testimony That One Has Received Christ!**
- 4. The Distinctive Of Necessity—Though Not Necessary For Salvation, Believer's Baptism By Immersion Is A Requisite To Church Membership.**

This is what the Bible teaches!

I. THE WORD OF CHRIST DECLARES THAT ONLY BELIEVERS ARE TO BE BAPTIZED!

(MATTHEW 28:19-20; MARK 16:14-16)

Note in verse 16, belief comes first, then baptism.

You can omit baptism and be saved, but if you omit belief you shall be damned.

II. THE PRACTICE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST ESTABLISHED BELIEVER'S IMMERSION!

(MATTHEW 3:5-8; 11; JOHN 3:23)

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III. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST PATTERNS BAPTISM BY IMMERSION! (MATTHEW 3:13-17)

IV. THE EARLY CHURCH PRACTICED BELIEF, BAPTISM, CHURCH MEMBERSHIP— IN THAT ORDER. (ACTS 2:41; 8:36-38)

V. THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF BAPTISM NECESSITATES BELIEVERS BAPTISM BY IMMERSION. (ROMANS 6:3-5)

VI. MODES OF BAPTISM.

A. The Baptists And Others Who Baptize By Immersion Maintain That It Signifies The Believer's Identification With The Death, Burial, And Resurrection Of Christ, And Therefore Insist It Must Be Done By A Complete Immersion In The Waters Of Baptism.

B. Those Who Practice Pouring Maintain It Signifies The Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit Upon The Believer And His Infilling With The Spirit.

1. No Instances Of This Can Be Found In Scripture.
2. It Stresses The Work Of The Holy Spirit Instead Of The Work Of Christ.

C. The Reformed, The Methodists, And The Anglicans, Who Sprinkle, Maintain Baptism Signifies The Cleansing Away Of The Believer's Sins By The Blood Of Christ.

1. No Instances Of This Can Be Found In Scripture.
2. The Symbolism Is Poor.

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VII. SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES ON BAPTISM:

The word "baptize" was not an English word but is a Greek word which was "transliterated" or lifted out of the Greek text without translation.

A Greek lexicon gives this meaning to the word "baptize":
"To dip, immerse, bathe, dye, submerge, place into or be identified with."

Testimonies from some early Bible scholars:

John Calvin: *"The very word 'baptizo' means to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the early church."*

Martin Luther: *"Baptism' is a Greek word and may be translated 'immersion.' I should have those who are baptized to be altogether dipped in water."*

John Wesley: *" 'Buried with him by baptism'—alluded to the ancient method of immersion."*

Items Regarding Baptism Which Are Practiced By Some:

1. Some faiths believe you must be baptized in a river.
2. Some faiths have spotters to make sure the person is totally submerged.
3. Baptism immediately after profession is preferred by most.

What If You Refuse To Be Baptized After Trusting Christ?

1. **Disobedience**— *James 4:17—"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*
2. **Loss Of Testimony**— *John 8:31—"If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed."*

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3. **Loss Of Fellowship**— *John 15:14—"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."*

What About Problem Passages?

1. **Acts 2:38**—The Greek preposition "eis" which is translated "for" means "because of"

(See Matthew 12:41 where it is translated "because").

Cf. Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:1-6; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Acts 16:30-31; Acts 10:44

2. **1 Peter 3:18-21**—How were Noah and his family saved? By being in the Ark which was a type of Christ.

How are we saved? By being in Christ.

Noah and his family went through the judgment waters in the ark. Our sins were judged in Christ.

Remember the word **baptism** means "to be placed into" also. Just because the Bible says baptism, it does not necessarily mean it is referring to water baptism every time.