



BIBLE BAPTISMS DIGEST

The New Testament mentions several baptisms. Failure to understand and distinguish between them leads to confusion and error. Note that *baptism* always connotes immersion, dipping, an overwhelming, or submersion. Here is a digest of Bible baptisms:

- **Israel's "baptism":** Paul described Israel's passage through the Red Sea (Exo. 13–14) as a baptism "in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1–2). Walls of water on either side and the cloud above fully immersed them. As that "baptism" freed them from Egyptian slavery, so our baptism frees us from sin's dominion.
- **Pre-Pentecost baptism:** John "the baptizer" first administered this baptism in water (as the apostles also did later [John 4:1–2]). It involved repentance and confession of sins

(Mat. 3:6–9) and was "unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). It was preparatory for Jesus' kingdom/church (Mat. 3:2)

- **Suffering baptism:** Jesus referred to his agony on the cross as a "baptism" he must undergo (Mark 10:35–38; Luke 12:50). His suffering at Calvary was not a mere sprinkling or pouring, but an immersion in it.
- **Holy Spirit baptism:** John stated that Jesus would baptize "in the Holy Spirit" (Mat. 3:11). Jesus later specifically applied this promise to His **apostles** (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). Just before He ascended to the Father, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for its fulfillment (Acts 1: 1–5, 8), which came **only upon them** on Pentecost (26–2:1–4, 14). Implication demands that Paul was also baptized in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 11–12). Later, the Lord caused "the like gift" to come upon Cornelius and his guests (Acts 10:44–46; 11:15–17). This overwhelming in power was very exclusive, was administered only by Christ, was not a condition of salvation, and is not known apart from these manifestations.
- **Fire baptism:** John also stated that Jesus would baptize "in fire" (Mat. 3:11). He went on to describe this fire as destructive and "unquenchable" (v. 12). Fire baptism refers to the fire of Hell, the eternal abode of sinners after The Judgment (Mark 9:48; 2 The. 1:7–9; Rev. 20:14–15).
- **The "one baptism":** **Only one** remains in effect from Pentecost (when first preached) "unto the end of the world" (Mat. 28:19–20; Acts 2:38–47). It is a burial in water (8:36–38; Rom. 6:4), it is preceded by a confessed faith in Christ (Acts 2:37; 8:37) and repentance (Acts 2:38). It is the act in which one is cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ (Acts 22: 16; Rom. 6:3; Rev. 1:5) and is saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). It clearly is an essential condition to one's salvation.

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