

What Is Baptism? – No. 4

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In previous articles in this series, we have seen that by actual definition, the Greek word *baptidzo* means to **overwhelm, dip, plunge, submerge or immerse**, both in its literal and its figurative usages. We have also noted that the descriptions of the act of baptism in the New Testament completely support this definition (John 3:23; Acts 8:38–39; Rom 6:4; Col. 2:12).

While we have already called your attention to the statements of lexicons concerning the meaning of *baptism* in the New Testament, let us now cite quotations from numerous religious leaders of the past few centuries. Please understand that these are not cited to embarrass anyone or to prove that some are right, and others are wrong on this subject. Our purpose is to exalt the Truth of God's Word, and hopefully to persuade you to obey it. Now to our quotes:

- **Martin Luther** ("Father of the Reformation," founder of the Lutheran Church): "Baptism is called in the Greek language *Baptismos*, in Latin, *mersio*, which means to plunge something entirely into the water, so that the water closes over it."
- **John Calvin** (Reformer, a founder of Presbyterian Church): "The very word *baptize* ... signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."
- **John Wesley** (founder of Methodist Church): "We are buried with him, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."
- **Dean Stanley** (Church of England): "For the first 13 centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is very meaning of the word "baptize" – that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into water."
- **Ignatius Dollinger** (Roman Catholic scholar): "At first baptism commonly took place in the Jordan...It was by immersion of the whole person, which is the only meaning of the New Testament word. A mere pouring or sprinkling was never thought of."
- **George P. Fisher** (Congregationalist): "Baptism, it is now commonly admitted among scholars, was commonly by immersion."

Each of these quotations has two things in common:

1. They are unanimous in their definition of baptism as immersion.
2. They all come from members of churches that have substituted sprinkling and pouring for immersion.

Their scholarship and honor require them to refute their own practice.

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