

What is Baptism?

The English word "baptism" is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*. This Greek word was used to indicate immersion, plunging, dipping or an overwhelming. Transliteration is the practice of writing in alphabetical characters the sound of the words of one language into the same sounds of alphabetical characters of another language. The translators of the 1611 **King James Version** of the Bible transliterated *baptizo* as baptize because many religious groups of that day and age were sprinkling people and calling it baptism. Instead of possibly offending these people who falsely baptized, we live today with a great amount of confusion on this one word that could have been avoided if *baptizo* had been correctly translated. Despite this transliteration, a study of a few biblical passages will clarify that the act of baptism conforms to the activity indicated in the definitions of the Greek word *baptizo* - an immersion, plunging, dipping, or overwhelming - and not a sprinkling or pouring. For those seeking to be a part of God's fold today, this is an essential point, that baptism is immersion.

Only immersion could have been the correct manner of baptism in the New Testament. In John 3:23, it states that "John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there." There are two important implications in this Scripture. John chose a place where a lot of water was available; therefore, baptism must require much water, for an immersion. Why would John need much water for simply sprinkling or pouring? Each could have easily have been accomplished with a large bowl or jug of water, yet there is the clear indication that much water was needed for those who submitted to John's Baptism. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), taught Jesus and baptism by Philip, asked to baptized. Both had to go "down into the water" for the

Eunuch to baptized. Why would Philip go into the water if he could have just sprinkled or poured? Philip had to dip or immerse the Eunuch, so both had to get wet. Even Christ in Matthew 3:16 "came up immediately from the water" a clear indication that he was immersed. Pouring or sprinkling was not enough even for the sinless Christ. Biblical example shows that baptism is immersion.

Baptism is an essential for salvation for those taught the Gospel. It is the act of obedience that allows the blood of Christ to wash away one's sins (Acts 22:16). To all who seek salvation, hear the call of Peter, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Without belief in the Gospel and baptism, man cannot be saved (Mark 16:16). Please, be baptized (fully immersed in water) into Christ so that you may walk in the "newness of life" (Romans 6:4).