

Episode #707 - Baptism 2: What Does Baptism Mean?

- I. We are taking a break from our studies of the book of Matthew to consider the very important topic of baptism brought up by John's baptism in Matthew 3.
- II. We are examining the Bible to see what It actually teaches about the topic of baptism.
- III. The word "baptism" is far more important than many today make it to be. It denotes a number of ideas or concepts and is used to set forth a number of truths in the Bible.
 - A. In all languages, words are used this way. Example: gold.
 - B. Each time we come upon a word, we must determine from its context what idea or concept it was intended to convey.
 - C. We can be blind to the multiple meanings of words. For example: Christ rains.
 - D. The minds of most are just as blind whenever they come upon the word "baptism" in Scripture. They just gloss over a passage like Matthew 3:11.
- IV. "Baptism" is a word that has **never been translated**.
 - A. "Baptize" comes from cutting the "o" off *baptizo* and adding an "e." "Baptism" comes from cutting the "a" off *baptisma*. These words must be studied as Greek words, not English words.
 - B. No information is imparted about the Spanish word *manzana* if we say, "*Manzana* means *manzana*." "*Manzana* means 'apple,'" tells us something. "*Baptizo* means 'to baptize'" is just as worthless a statement.
 - C. Mark 16:16. What would this passage mean if *baptizo* were translated into English? Could it still be used to say a water ritual is necessary to be saved?
 - D. Acts 2:41. Most form a mental picture of 3,000 people marching off from the "upper room" to a body of water for a ritual. But if *baptizo* were translated?
 - E. I Corinthians 15:29. Would Mormons be able to apply this to their elaborate system of ritual baptisms for dead ancestors if *baptizo* were translated?
- V. The historical development of the word *baptizo* must be considered.
 - A. Many insist *baptizo* means "to immerse." Rotherham translates it this way in every New Testament occurrence. This ignores the historical development of the word, also the secondary and metaphorical use. These uses are far more important than its basic meaning!
 - B. Words can soar to much greater heights than their basic meanings. The basic meaning of English "heaven," Hebrew *shamayim*, and Greek *ouranos* is height, being over and above, but it soars even to meaning God Himself!
 - C. Compare Matthew 3:11, 20:22, and Luke 12:50. There are passages where *baptizo* means a water ritual, and passages where it cannot mean this. God communicates a number of concepts by this word. Are we to lose these in order to give preeminence to a water ritual we are enamored with?
 - D. To study a word, one must carefully consider its history. Example: "crank" means something bent. The verb "crankle" came out of it meaning to zig-zag. "To crinkle-crankle" meant to move in a zig-zag manner. "Crinkle" comes from "crankle." In the seventeenth century it was used for a twist in speech. Later, it came to mean an eccentric idea or act. Eccentric people are called "cranks." The bent bar used to start an automobile was called a "crank."

- E. *Bapto* is the basic word of this family of words. Luke 16:24 & John 13:26, clearly means “to dip.” Revelation 19:13, means “to dye.” This word was taken up by the dyeing industry, and so it added this meaning.
- F. Over time, it came to be spelled *baptizo*, which added intensity.
- G. The Septuagint translators knew *baptizo* meant both “to dip” and “to dye.” II Kings 5:14, translating Hebrew “to dip,” Ezekiel 23:15, translating “to dye.” (dyed turbans)
- H. The Greek-speaking translators of the Septuagint recognized another meaning. Isaiah 21:4. NKJV “fearfulness frightened me,” Septuagint “fearfulness baptized me.” In this sense, means “fearfulness overwhelmed me.” Why the Lord spoke of His death as a baptism. Matt. 20:22,23; Mark 10:38,39; Luke 12:50.

VI. Conclusion. The word baptism is not translated. To discover its meaning, we must realize all words have multiple meanings. We must consider the historical development of this word. It can mean “to dip,” “to dye,” and “to overwhelm.” Yet is there another, even more important meaning? We will consider this in our next message.