

Episode #708 Baptism 3: Baptism Means Identification

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 dealing with the fact that baptism is a Greek word (*baptisma*) that has never been translated. The basic meaning of *bapto*, the basic word of the family, is to dip. However, it also developed the meanings "to dye" and "to overwhelm."

III. The historical development of the word *baptizo* must be considered.

A. *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.

B. Over time, it came to be spelled *baptizo*, which added intensity.

C. 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)

D. 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.

E. It developed another meaning from its use in the dyeing industry (like broadcast). Cloth that is dyed is not just colored, but takes on the character of the dye. Acts 16:14, the purple cloth Lydia sold is called "purple." From this comes a concept of baptism hard to express in English since we have no one word to express it. The closest we can come are the words "identify" and "identification."

IV. Baptism Means "Identification."

A. We must add the thought of merging and relating. A man hired by a company is identified with it, but not merged. When three men go into a partnership to form a company, they are identified with, related with, and merged with it.

B. With all these concepts in mind, we must ask each time we come upon a member of the *bapto* family of words which idea or concept is meant.

C. Six members: *bapto*, *baptisma*, *baptistes*, *baptizo*, *baptismos*, and *embapto*.

D. Job 12:11: the ear tests words. Example: strike has about sixty meanings.

E. We can determine the meaning of "strike" automatically from a sentence since English is our mother tongue. With a foreign word, however, it becomes much more difficult. We need to laboriously put the missing info into our minds.

V. Using the Meaning of Baptism.

A. Mark 16:15-20. If *baptizo* means a water ritual, this ritual has an importance equal to believing! This would deny our completeness in Christ, Col. 2:10. Rather, "He that believeth and is identified shall be saved." As the following verses show, when they identified themselves with Him, He identified Himself with them by signs.

B. Matthew 10:32. R.C.H. Lenski, "Whoever thus confesses and identifies himself with Christ, with him Christ will identify Himself, him Christ will confess." Lenski recognized *homologeō* means "to say the same thing as another," implying pressure leading to doing that. Our word "avow" is better.

C. I Corinthians 10:2. These men were identified with Moses.

D. I Peter 3:20,21. The other seven souls were saved by their identification with Noah. Like this, we are saved by identification with Christ.

E. Galatians 3:26,27. Those who are identified with Christ have put on Christ. No man can achieve this by finding someone to dip him in water!

F. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, "an ordinance, not a doctrine." !!!

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," "to overwhelm," or "to identify." Only an examination of the context can inform us which it means in a certain passage.