

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Biblical Baptism

20th April 2014

0. INTRO

- There are several interpretations of baptism – churches, denominations, theologies...
- in the past “the dippers were dipped” (drowned) for their faith and practice:

The Council of St. Gall, at the instigation of Zwingli, it is alleged, determined to rid themselves of the "Dippers." As the Baptists dipped for baptism they were to be drowned for punishment. The edict is as follows:

In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If any one is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment. Every person is obliged to report those favorable to rebaptism. Whoever shall not comply with this ordinance is liable to punishment according to the sentence of the magistracy. Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers, and leaders of hedge meetings are to be drowned. Those previously released from prison who have sworn to desist from such things, shall incur the same penalty. Foreign Baptists are to be driven out; if they return they shall be drowned. No one is allowed to secede from the (Zwinglian) church and to absent himself from the Holy Supper. Whoever flees from one jurisdiction to another shall be banished or extradited upon demand (Simler, Sammlung, I. ii. 449).

The date of the decree is September 9, 1527.¹

1. LANGUAGE

- the word (“baptism”) – of secular origins: “I entirely agree, said Aristophanes, that we should, by all means, avoid hard drinking, for I was myself one of those who were yesterday drowned in drink.”²

νία, τὸ παντὶ τρόπῳ παρασκευάσασθαι βροστώνην τινὰ τῆς
πόσεως· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς εἰμι τῶν χθὲς βεβαπτισμένων. »

- secular Greek dictionary³

Ἰβαπτέον, verb. adj. from βάπτω, one must dip or dye, Clem. Al.

Ἰβάπτῃς, οὐ, ὁ, (βάπτω) one who dips or dyes; in pl. οἱ βάπται, the Baptae, priests of the goddess Cotytto, Eupol.

Βαπτίζω, f. -ίσω, (βάπτω) to dip repeatedly; of ships, to sink them, Polyb. 2, 51, 6, etc.—Pass., To bathe, Eubul. Naus. 1: οἱ βεβαπτισμένοι, soaked in wine, Lat. vino madidi, Plat. Symp. 176 B: ὀφλήμασι βεβ., over head and ears in debt, Plut. Galb. 21; μειράκιον βαπτίζομενον, a boy drowned with questions, Heind. Plat. Euthyd. 277 D.—II. to draw water, Plut. Alex. 67; cf. βάπτω.—III. to baptize, N. T. Hence,

Βάπτισις, εως, ἡ, a dipping, bathing; a washing, drawing water; baptism, Eccl.

Βάπτισμα, ατος, τό, that which is dipped.—II. =foreg., N. T.

Βαπτισμός, οὔ, ὁ, =βάπτισις, N. T. Βαπτιστήριον, ον, τό, a bathing-place, swimming-bath, Plin.: the baptistery of a church, Eccl.

Βαπτιστής, οὔ, ὁ, (βαπτίζω) one that dips, a dyer.—II. a baptizer; ὁ βαπτ., the Baptist, N. T.

Βαπτός, ἡ, ὄν, dipped, dyed: bright coloured, Ar. Av. 287.—II. drawn like water, Eur. Hipp. 123: from

ΒΑΨΤΩ, fut. βάψω: perf. pass. βέθαμμαι: aor. 2 pass. ἐβάψην, trans. to dip, dip under, Lat. immergere, πέλεκυν εἰν ὕδατι, of the smith tempering the red-hot steel, Od. 9, 392, v. βαφή.—2. to dip in dye, colour, steep, εἴματα βεβαμμένα, Hdt. 7, 67; βάπτεισθαι, to dye the hair, v. Moer. p. 263: also of the glazing of earthen vessels; proverb. βάπτειν τινα βάμμα Σαρδιανικόν, to steep one in crimson, give him a bloody coxcomb, Elmsl. Ar. Ach. 112, v. βάμμα.—3. to fill by dipping in, draw, Theocr. 5, 127.—II. intrans., ναῦς ἐβαψεν, the ship dipped, sank, Eur. Or. 707.

- Old Testament Greek (LXX)

- 2Ki 5:14 καὶ κατέβη Ναιμαν καὶ ἐβαπτίσατο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ἑπτὰκι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα Ἐλισαίε

¹ CHRISTIAN, J. *The History of the Baptists*, p. 121.

² PLATO *Symposium 176B*.

³ PASSOW - LIDDELL - SCOTT - DRISLER *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 260.

- New Testament Greek: baptism ...a religious ceremony designed to symbolize purification and initiation on the basis of repentance

[THAYER:] **βάπτισμα**, βαπτίσματος, τό (βαπτίζω), a word peculiar to N. T. and ecclesiastical writings, *immersion, submersion*;

1. used tropically of *calamities* and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed: Mat 20:22; Mar 10:38; Luk 12:50

2. of *John's baptism*, that purificatory rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to a spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up: Matt. 3:7; 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 7:29; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 18:25; (19:3); βάπτισμα μετανοίας, *binding to repentance* ...; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4..

3. of *Christian baptism*; this, according to the view of the apostles, is a rite of sacred immersion, commanded by Christ, by which men *confessing* their sins and professing their *faith* in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, come into the fellowship of Christ and the church (1 Cor. 12:13), and are made partakers of eternal salvation...

βαπτισμός, βαπτισμού, ὁ (βαπτίζω), a *washing, purification effected by means of water*: Mark 7:4,8 (ξεστῶν καὶ ποτηρίων); of the *washings* prescribed by the Mosaic law, Hb 9:10. βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς equivalent to διδαχῆς περί βαπτισμῶν, Hb 6:2 (where L text, WH text, βαπτισμῶν διδαχῆς), which seems to mean an exposition of the difference between the washings prescribed by the Mosaic law and Christian baptism. (Among secular writings Josephus alone, Antiquities 18, 5, 2, uses the word, and of John's baptism; ...

βαπτιστής, βαπτιστοῦ, ὁ (βαπτίζω), a *baptizer; one who administers the rite of baptism*; the surname of John, the forerunner of Christ: Matt. 3:1; 11:11f; (Matt. 14:2,8; 16:14; 17:13); Mark 6:24 (T Tr WH τοῦ βαπτίζοντος), Mark 6:25; 8:28; Luke 7:20,28 (T Tr WH omit), Luke 7:38; 9:19; also given him by Josephus, Antiquities 18, 5, 2, and found in no other secular writings ...

βάπτω: (future βάψω, John 13:26 T Tr WH); 1 aorist ἐβαψα; perfect passive participle βεβαμμένος; in Greek writings from Homer down; in the Septuagint for βῆψ; a. *to dip, dip in, immerse*: τί, John 13:26 ...; followed by a genitive of the thing into which the object is dipped (because only a part of it is touched by the act of *dipping*), Lk 16:24 (cf. ἄπτεσθαι τίνος, λούεσθαι ποταμοιο, Homer, Iliad 5, 6; 6, 508; cf. Buttmann, sec. 132, 25; (Winer's Grammar, sec. 30, 8. c.)). b. *to dip into dye, to dye, color*: ἱμάτιον αἵματι, Rev 19:13 (Tdf. περιεραμμενον, see under the word περιρραίνω; WH ῥεραντισμενον, see ῥαντίζω). (Herodotus 7, 67; Anth. 11, 68; Josephus, Antiquities 3, 6, 1.) (Compare: ἐμβάπτω.)

2. HISTORY

- Calvin's mistake - the rite of baptism should be *administered* the same way as the rite of circumcision - physical(!)

“...circumcision was the same thing to them as in Paul’s teaching it was to Abraham, namely, a sign of the righteousness of faith” (Rom 4:11)⁴ “...But if the covenant still remains firm and steadfast, it applies no less today to the children of Christians than under the Old Testament it pertained to the infants of the Jews.”⁵

- **Rom 2:29** → circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.
- **Acts 15:9** → ...cleansed their hearts by faith.

2.1. BAPTISM OF JOHN (REQUIRES CONFESSION - ACTS 19)

- prophetic - not just another "washing" according to the law of Moses
- confessing sins - refused to baptise the pharisees who did not change their lives

2.2. BAPTISM OF JESUS (EXPRESSES IDENTIFICATION - ROM 6)

- Jesus: baptises in the Spirit

3. PRACTICE

- **Hb 13:12-13** So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the *reproach* (humiliation, disgrace, abuse) he endured. (τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες·).

- **Rom 4:11** [baptism↔circumcision analogy] ...he [Abraham] received the sign [σημεῖον] of circumcision, a seal [σφραγίς] of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised...

→ baptism is a *sign* of what is has happened and is happening inwardly by faith (we cannot manipulate God into doing anything by some “abracadabra” rites)

⁴ CALVIN, J. *Institutes IV.14.21*;

⁵ CALVIN, J. *Institutes IV.16.5*

→ baptism is a *seal* that gives protection against apostasy – of course it cannot give it without faith...