



In this study we examine what is meant by the concept of **baptism** in the New Testament.

‘To baptise’ is the translation of two Greek verbs:

- bapto
- baptizo

Word study ‘bapto’.

The OLB translates **‘bapto’** as:

- to dip, dip in, immerse
- to dip into dye, to dye, colour

The Greek/Dutch dictionary gives the translations:

- to immerse into, to make wet
- to ladle
- to die

‘Bapto’ is only found in three Bible texts:

- *So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to **dip (bapto)** the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’* (Luke 16:24)
- *Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I **have dipped (bapto)** it in the dish.” Then, dipping (embapto: to dip in) the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.* (John 13:26)
- *He is dressed in a robe **dipped (bapto)** in blood, and his name is the Word of God.* (Revelation 19:13)

It can be concluded from these Bible texts that the verb **‘bapto’** has the meaning in our language of: making something wet, **‘dipping’**, **‘immersing in’** or **‘dying’** material.

It is clear that **‘bapto’** is not used for water baptism or the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Word study ‘baptizo’.

The OLB translates **‘baptizo’** as:

- to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
- to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe
- to overwhelm

Het Greek/Dutch dictionary gives the translations:

- to immerse
- to wash
- to baptise

‘Baptizo’ is found in 63 Bible texts, almost all of which refer to water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A few examples:

- *Confessing their sins, they **were baptised (baptizo)** by him in the Jordan River. (Matthew 3:6)*
- *I **baptise (baptizo)** you with (in) water, but he will baptize you with (in) the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8)*
- *Some were saying, “John the **Baptist (baptizo)** - literally: John the baptiser or, John who baptises) has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.” (Mark 6:14)*
- *But I have a **baptism (baptizo)** to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! (Luke 12:50)*
- *For John **baptised (baptizo)** with (in) water, but in a few days you will **be baptized (baptizo)** with (in) the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:5)*
- *Those who accepted his message **were baptised (baptizo)**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (Acts 2:41)*
- *So Paul asked, “Then what **baptism (baptizo)** did you receive?” “John’s baptism (baptisma: immersion, submersion) ” they replied. (Acts 19:3)*
- *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you **baptised (baptizo)** in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:13)*
- *They were all **baptised (baptizo)** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Corinthians 10:2)*
- *... for all of you who **were baptised (baptizo)** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Galatians 3:27)*

In these Bible texts it can be concluded that **‘baptizo’** does not mean that something is made wet, as with **‘bapto’**, but is **immersed**.

Distinction between ‘bapto’ and ‘baptizo’.

The distinction between **‘bapto’** and **‘baptizo’** is illustrated clearly in a recipe of the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived around 200 B.C.

The OLB refers to his recipe for pickling vegetables in vinegar, in which both words appear.

According to Nicander, to make vinegar, the vegetables must first be **‘dipped’ (bapto)** in boiling water and then **‘immersed’ (baptizo)** in vinegar.

Both verbs refer to the immersion of vegetables.

One word (**bapto**) is temporarily, however.

The other (**baptizo**) is permanently.

The vegetables must **remain** immersed in the vinegar in order to be preserved for a long time. Sauerkraut is still prepared in the same way today.¹

¹ Study: Preparation of sauerkraut.

Conclusion.

Immersion is a better translation, instead of baptism, for the concept of '**baptizo**' and would be better replaced by **immerse** in the Bible texts.

Immersion in water, or immersion in the Holy Spirit has the underlying symbolical thought that the person who is immersed, **remains immersed**.

See also the studies:

- Baptism - in water and in the Holy Spirit.²
- Baptism - in the New Testament.³

² Study: Baptism - in water and in the Holy Spirit.

³ Study: Baptism - in the New Testament.