



In this study we give some thought to a few texts from the New Testament with reference to baptism/immersion 'in' the name of ...

- Acts 2:38 - baptism **in (Greek: epi)** the name of Jesus Christ
- Matthew 28:19 - baptism **in (Greek: eis)** the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- Acts 8:16 - baptism **in (Greek: eis)** the name of Jesus
- Acts 19:3-5 - baptism **in (Greek: eis)** the name of Jesus
- Acts 10:48 - baptism **in (Greek: en)** the name of Jesus

The meaning of the little Greek words 'epi', 'eis' and 'en' is a determining factor in the interpretation of these texts.

The distinction between these three little words is explained in the study 'Word study of the little Greek words epi, en, eis'<sup>1</sup>.

### **Remark:**

Without mentioning the fact explicitly, it is assumed in this study that the correct meaning of 'baptism' is 'immersion'.<sup>2</sup>

### **Acts 2:38 - baptism in (epi) the name ...**

Peter brings the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the crowd that rushes together when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Day of Pentecost.

When the people ask: What shall we do? He answers:

- *Repent and **be baptised**, every one of you, **in (epi) the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)*

Baptism by immersion was well-known in Jewish tradition, think of John the Baptist.

This is why Peter emphasizes the fact that one, after conversion, must be baptised **in (Greek: epi – to be interpreted here as: in relationship to) the name of Jesus Christ**.

Peter distinguishes this baptism from tradition by connecting it with the name of Jesus Christ.

Notice that he mentions **only** the name of Jesus Christ in connection with this baptism after conversion.

### **Matthew 28:19 - baptism in (eis) the name ...**

Just before Jesus was to leave this world He told His disciples that all power/authority had been given to Him, both in heaven and on earth.

He then sends His disciples into the world with the words:

- *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19)*

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1 Study: Word study of the Greek words epi, en, eis.

2 Study: Baptism – word study.



This text in a more literal translation:

- *Therefore, following your way, make all nations to be my **disciples, immersing them in (eis: into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to pay careful attention to everything I assigned to you.***

### Concerning baptism/immersion:

**Water baptism is not necessarily meant** by immersion.

Baptism/immersion, the Greek word '**baptiso**', speaks of **cleansing by immersion** as well in fact. In that way, teaching is also a baptism/an immersion, as Jesus told His disciples:

- *You are already **clean because of the word** I have spoken to you ... (John 15:3)*

Expressed otherwise: *You are now clean because of the word in which I have immersed you.*

Or, as Paul says, that:

- *Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, **cleansing her by (Greek 'en' = in) the washing with water through the word,** ... (Ephesians 5:25-26)*

Think too of the statement of Jesus to His disciples:

- *I have a baptism/immersion to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! (Luke 12:50)*

Or, as Mark writes that Jesus says to James and John:

- *Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised/immersed with the baptism/immersion I am baptised/immersed? (Mark 10:38)*

It is clear that Jesus is referring here to the suffering that He must be 'immersed' in, so that the sin of the world can be taken away.

### Interpretation of the text:

Jesus gives His disciples the assignment to make all nations to be His disciples.

He means not only converting them, but also teaching them continually and instructing them to carefully put everything He taught the disciples into practice.

This also explains the use of the participle:

- *... make all nations to be my **disciples, immersing them in (eis: into) the name ..., teaching them carefully to pay attention to everything I assigned to you.***

### **Biblical teaching is:**

- **continual immersion in the name, the authority of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**
- **and continual immersion in the teaching of Jesus.**

This is not teaching whereby one is only taught how to behave as a Christian according to the Bible, but teaching people in such a manner that they put their trust completely in the Almighty God, as the Trinity.

This is explained in the studies 'Believing in Jesus Christ'<sup>3</sup> and 'In my name/in the name of'<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Study: Believing in Jesus Christ.



## Acts 8:16 - baptism in (eis) the name ...

Jesus' disciples departed from Jerusalem because of persecution.

- *Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. (Acts 8:5)*
- *But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised/immersed, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)*
- *When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ... (Acts 8:14-15)*

This was necessary:

- *... because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had **simply been baptised/immersed in (into) the name of the Lord Jesus.** (Acts 8:16)*

### Question:

Had the Holy Spirit not yet come on any of them because they were baptised **only in the name of the Lord Jesus** and not, as is usually the case, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Or is this verse **not** about water baptism?

Philip had proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ to the Samaritans (verse 12).

The Samaritans were immersed by Philip **in (eis: into)** the name (the authority) of God and of Jesus Christ, according to Jesus' instruction in Matthew 28:19.

Whoever believed in this preaching was baptised **in (en)** water by Philip.

Philip had apparently **not** taught/immersed the Samaritans **in (eis: in to) the authority of the Holy Spirit** however.

When Peter and John arrived they will firstly have taught/immersed the Samaritans **in (eis: into)** the Holy Spirit, so that the believers would also be immersed **in (en)** the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup>, which then took place:

- *Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17)*

## Acts 19:3-5 - baptism in (eis) the name ....

Paul meets a few disciples in Ephesus. He asks them whether they received the Holy Spirit when they were converted. They did not even know that the Holy Spirit existed, however.

- *So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive? (**what: (eis: into)** what were you baptised)" "John's baptism," they replied. (Acts 19:3)*

These disciples had received **no teaching** about the Holy Spirit.

They had been taught by Apóllōs, who had only heard of the teaching and the baptism of John, as

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4 Study: In my name / in the name of.

5 Study: The baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Paul said:

- *John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He **told the people to believe in (eis: into) the one coming after him, that is, in (eis: into) Jesus.** (Acts 19:4)*
- *On hearing this, they were **baptised/immersed in (eis: into) the name of the Lord Jesus.** (Acts 19:5)*

It is generally accepted that these disciples from Ephesus were baptised in water again, this time **in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

There is also another possible explanation.

Paul was not actually someone who was seeking to baptise people.

He told the Corinthians, a large church founded by him, that he only baptised two people and a family from that church:

- *... so no one can say that you were baptized in (eis: into) my name. (1 Corinthians 1:15)*

For, he says:

- *Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, ... (1 Corinthians 1:17)*

It does not seem to be in Paul's nature to baptise people.

He therefore does not ask **in what (en)** the disciples from Ephesus were baptised, for that was certainly in water.

He asks **into what (eis)** they were baptised.

Expressed otherwise: **To which baptism did you come?**

Or: Which **teaching** have you received, on the basis of which you were baptised?

Paul then also tells the believers in Ephesus that John the Baptist said that one must believe **in (eis: into) Jesus.**

- *On hearing this, they were baptised **in (eis: into) the name of the Lord Jesus.** (Acts 19:5)*

That would mean that they were **immersed in the teaching** about Jesus.

Whether Paul also immersed them in water afterwards, **in (en)** the name of Jesus, is not clear.

## **Acts 10:48 - baptism in (en) the name ....**

Peter is invited by Cornelius, an army captain:

- *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. (Acts 10:1-2)*

Cornelius was already **aware of the teaching of Jesus** according to verse 37.

Peter confirms the truth of what Cornelius has heard about Jesus and arrives at the crux of his message with the words:

- *All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes/trusts **in (eis: into) him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.** (Acts 10:43)*

Apparently, as a result, the pieces of the puzzle fall in place for Cornelius and his household and God confirms their faith/trust, for:



- *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (Acts 10:44)*

Peter then orders:

- *... that they be baptized **in (en) the name of Jesus Christ.** (Acts 10:48)*

Notice that Peter orders that they be baptised **only** in the name of the Here Jesus.

### **Conclusion:**

Biblical teaching is directed towards **immersing** converts **into (eis)** the authority of God the Father, of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

This teaching must result in a convert's **going on to live as a disciple in (en) the authority of Jesus.**

As Jesus said:

- *On that day you will realize that I am **in (en)** my Father, and you are **in (en)** me, and I am **in (en)** you. (John 14:20)*

'**In**', as a translation of the Greek '**en**', always refers here to the **place of action**.

Whoever is taught and goes on to believe/trust **into (eis)** Jesus and live as a disciple **in (en)** His authority as a result, should be immersed **in (en)** water **in (en)** the name (authority) of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Study: Baptism - in water and in the Holy Spirit.