

# BAPTISM

## Chapter Four

### Translation Issues Regarding Baptism

The vast majority of what professing Christianity proclaims to be *baptism* is not biblical baptism at all. In fact, very few sects of *Christianity* (I use the term *Christianity* in the vaguest of sense of the word) actually *baptize*. The Greek word *baptizo* (bap-tid'-zo) means “to immerse, submerge”<sup>1</sup> or at the least, “to makewhelmed (i.e. fully wet).”<sup>2</sup> A contextual understanding of the practice that we call *baptism* today would actually translate *baptizo* as *immersion in water* or *burial in water*. This is the *only way* water baptism can fit the biblical model of practice. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that most sects of *Christianity* do not *baptize*. They *sprinkle* and occasionally *pour*. Therefore, these sects do not only misrepresent the *purpose* of baptism, but they do so because they miss the *mode* of baptism as well.

“<sup>22</sup> After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized {*baptizo*, bap-tid'-zo}. <sup>23</sup> And John also was baptizing in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John was not yet cast into prison. <sup>25</sup> Then there arose a question between *some* of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. <sup>26</sup> And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. <sup>27</sup> John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. <sup>29</sup> He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease. <sup>31</sup> He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. <sup>33</sup> He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. <sup>34</sup> For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*. <sup>35</sup> The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup> He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:22-36).

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<sup>1</sup> Strong, Augustus, *Strong’s Greek Dictionary* (SwordSearcher Software 6.1)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps the first solution to the confusion being propagated by the word baptism is to stop using the transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo* and begin to actually translate it into English. The translation of *baptizo* would be the word *immerse* (in water). If we were to translate it according to its practical application, we would translate it as *bury* (in water). As we have already seen in the earlier studies, John the Baptist was undoubtedly immersing converts in water.

Almost all of the confusion regarding the purpose and mode of baptism is due to the centuries of theological condescension to the Anglican High Church men who translated the King James Version of the Bible into English. However, these men did not originate the transliteration of *baptizo* into the English *baptize*. The etymology of our English transliteration of *baptizo* into *baptize* most probably comes from the Old French in the early 1300's.

“c. 1300, *bapteme*, from O.Fr. *batesme*, *bapteme* (11c., Mod.Fr. *bapteme*), from L. *baptismus*, from Gk. *baptismos*, noun of action from *baptizein*”<sup>3</sup>

John Wycliffe used this transliteration in his English translation (known as Wycliffe's Bible) in 1382 A.D. Wycliffe translated from the Latin Vulgate into English. Below is John Wycliffe's translation of John 3:22-23:

“<sup>22</sup> Aftir these thingis Jhesus cam, and hise disciplis, in to the loond of Judee, and there he dwellide with hem, and baptiside. <sup>23</sup> And Joon was baptisinge in Ennon, bisidis Salym, for many wattris weren there; and thei camen, and weren baptisid” (John 3:22-23).<sup>4</sup>

There is no apparent reason for John Wycliffe to transliterate either the Greek *baptizo* or the Latin *baptismus*, since Wycliffe was undoubtedly a Lollard<sup>5</sup>. The Lollards, like the Anabaptists, rejected infant baptism<sup>6</sup> (*Padeobaptism*) for *Credobaptism*<sup>7</sup> and they baptized by immersion. Even in the Church of England (the Anglican Church), it is generally agreed that sprinkling infants did not begin until 1644 A.D.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it would be incorrect to assume the translators of the King James Bible purposely transliterated the Greek *baptizo* into the English *baptize* because they did not believe in immersion. The King James Bible was translated in 1611 A.D., thirty-three years before *infant sprinkling* was adopted.

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<sup>3</sup> *Online Etymology Dictionary*

[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=baptism&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=baptism&searchmode=none)

<sup>4</sup> Wycliffe, John, *Wycliffe's Translation* (SwordSearcher Software 6.1)

<sup>5</sup> Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists Together with Some Account of Their Principles and Practices -Vol. I* (Texarkana, Ark-Tex., Bogard Press 1992), page 186

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, page 186

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, page 187

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* page 173

Martin Luther created a German translation of the Bible from “Erasmus’s second edition (1519) of the Greek New Testament, known as the *Textus Receptus*,”<sup>9</sup> first printed in 1534. Luther translated the Greek word *baptizo* into the German word *taufte* and *taufen*.<sup>10</sup> Both forms of the word mean to immerse. Although Luther believed in remission of sins through the consecrated waters of baptism (“the laver of regeneration”), he undoubtedly believed that immersion was the only acceptable mode of baptism. (In using words from different languages regarding *baptism*, it is like saying, “immersion is the only acceptable mode of immersion.”) Luther’s belief in both *baptismal regeneration* and in immersion as the only acceptable mode is clear from a sermon from him on baptism from 1518 A.D.:

“First baptism is called Greek *baptismos*, in Latin *mersio*, that is, when we dip anything wholly in water, that it is completely covered over. And although in many provinces it is no longer the custom (in other provinces it was the custom) to thrust the children into the font and to dip them; but they only pour water with the hands out of the font; nevertheless, it should be thus, and would be right, that after speaking aloud the word (baptize) the child or any one who is to be baptized, be completely sunk down into the water, and dipt again and drawn out, for without doubt in the German tongue the word (*taufe*) comes from the word *tief* (deep), that a man sinks deep into the water, what he dips. That also the signification of baptism demands, for it signifies that the old man and sinful birth from the flesh and blood shall be completely drowned through the grace of God. Therefore, a man should sufficiently perform the signification and a right perfect sign. The sign rests in this, that a man plunge a person in water in the name of the Father, etc., but does not leave him therein but lifts him out again; therefore it is called being lifted out of the font or depths. And so must all of both these things be the sign; the dipping and the lifting out. Thirdly, the signification is a saving death of the sins and of the resurrection of the grace of God. The baptism is a bath of the new birth. Also a drowning of the sins in the baptism (*Opera Lutheri*, I. 319. Folio edition).”<sup>11</sup>

Luther’s statements here reflect the conflicting and convoluted discussions of the Reformers in trying to reconcile the arguments of the Roman Catholicism that they rejected and the theological arguments of Augustine who they respected. That tension continues in almost all Reformed circles today.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther_Bible)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.bibledbdata.org/onlinebibles/german\\_1/43\\_003.htm](http://www.bibledbdata.org/onlinebibles/german_1/43_003.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists Together with Some Account of Their Principles and Practices - Vol. I* (Texarkana, Ark-Tex., Bogard Press 1992), page 108

Williams Tyndale (c. 1484 – 1536 A.D.) translated what came to be known as the Tyndale Bible (the N.T.) in 1526. Tyndale was greatly influenced by Luther, but his theology was more like Wycliffe. Some even purported that he was a Baptist. Tyndale followed Wycliffe in transliterating the Greek *baptizo* into the English *baptize*. I suspect the intent in this transliteration is not to cloud the issue of the mode of Baptism because, like Wycliffe, Tyndale was very vocal about immersion being the accepted mode. I suspect the intent to be a noble intent in using the transliteration to bring more focus upon the *meaning* of the ordinance than merely upon the *mode*. Tyndale's Bible "is credited with being the first English translation to work directly from Hebrew and Greek texts."<sup>12</sup> His translation of John 3:22-23 is as follows:

“<sup>22</sup> After these thinges cam Iesus and his disciples into the Iewes londe and ther he haunted with them and baptised. <sup>23</sup> And Iohn also baptised in Enon besydes Salim because ther was moche water there and they came and were baptized” (John 3:22-23).

Tyndale wrote extensively and most of his writings are summarized in a book published as *The Works of William Tyndale*. Christian gives us a number of quotes from that work.

“Davis (History of the Welsh Baptist, 21) claims that William Tyndale (A.D. 1484-1536) was a Baptist. . . ‘Llewellyn Tyndale and Hezekiah Tyndale were members of the Baptist church at Abergaverney, South Wales.’. . . It is certain he shared many views held by the Baptists; but that he was a member of a Baptist church is nowhere proved. He always translated the word *ecclesia* by the word congregation, and held to a local conception of a church (Tyndale, Works II. 13. London, 1831). There were only two offices in the church, pastor and deacons (I. 400). The elders or bishops should be married men (I. 265). Upon the subject of baptism he is very full. He is confident that baptism does not wash away sin. ‘It is impossible,’ says he, ‘that the waters of the river should wash out hearts’ (Ibid. 30). Baptism was a plunging into the water (Ibid. 287). Baptism to avail must include repentance, faith and confession (III. 179). The church must, therefore, consist of believers (Ibid. 25). His book in a wonderful manner states accurately the position of the Baptists.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyndale\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyndale_Bible)

<sup>13</sup> Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists Together with Some Account of Their Principles and Practices - Vol. I* (Texarkana, Ark-Tex., Bogard Press 1992), page 187-188

The Geneva Bible (N.T. published in 1557 A.D. and the complete Bible published in 1560 A.D.) was the first English translation widely accepted by Reformed churches. Its marginal references and comments were very *Calvinistic*. The Geneva Bible was translated from the *Textus Receptus* by William Whittingham (c. 1524-1579)<sup>14</sup>. He was a stout Calvinist and was married to John Calvin's sister<sup>15</sup>. The Geneva Bible also transliterates the Greek *baptizo* into the English *baptize*. The Geneva Bible translates John 3:21-22 as follows:

“<sup>22</sup> After these things, came Iesus & his disciples into the lande of Iudea, and there taried with them, and baptized. <sup>23</sup> And Iohn also baptized in Enon besides Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized” (John 3:21-22).<sup>16</sup>

Although John Calvin believed that baptism was dipping or immersing someone in water, he argued against it for practical reasons – i.e., most churches were not near lakes or rivers. After all, we should be clear about this – the Baptist's argument for re-baptizing people was not because they had not been properly immersed when they were baptized. The Baptist's argument for re-baptizing people was because these people were not saved when they were baptized by immersion. There is no record of adult or infant baptism (except in Roman Catholicism) by anything other than immersion until Calvin came on the scene. The Church of England did not begin sprinkling infants until about 1644 A.D. (33 years after the King James Version of 1611 A.D.).

Calvin's influence upon theology and the practices implemented into churches by rationalism should not be underestimated. His Soteriological, Eschatology, Pneumatology, and especially his Ecclesiology were all a horrible mess.

“The influence of John Calvin had begun to be felt in English affairs. His books had appeared in translations in England. He was responsible in a large measure for the demon of hate and fierce hostility which the Baptists of England had to encounter. He advised that ‘Anabaptists and reactionists should be alike put to death’ (Froude, History of England, V. 99). . . ‘These altogether deserve to be well punished by the sword, seeing that they do conspire against God, who had set him in his royal seat’ (referring to the Lord Protector Somerset of the Church of England).”<sup>17</sup> Statement in ( ) added.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Whittingham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Whittingham)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *The Geneva Bible* (SwordSearcher Software 6.1)

<sup>17</sup> Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists Together with Some Account of Their Principles and Practices - Vol. I* (Texarkana, Ark-Tex., Bogard Press 1992), page 198-199

“There are two examples in the writings of John Calvin which go to show that the Baptists were in the practice of dipping. Calvin came in direct contact with the Baptists and well knew their opinions, for he married the widow of a Baptist preacher. In the first example, he defines a well-known passage the meaning of the word. He says: ‘The word signifies to immerse, and it is certain that the rite of immersion was observed in the ancient church (Calvin, Institutes, Bk.IV. c 15).’

Immediately following this statement he makes a reply to a Baptist who urged that Acts 19:3-5 taught rebaptism. Calvin says to the Baptist: ‘That if ignorance vitiated the former baptism, so that another baptism is made to correct it; they were the first of all to be baptized by the apostles, who in all the three years after their baptism scarcely tasted a small particle of the measure of the sincere doctrine. Even now among us, where would there be sufficient rivers for a repetition of the dipping of so many, who in ignorance of the compassion of the Lord, are daily corrected among us (Ibid, c. 15. Sec. 18).’<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, Calvin believed that immersion was the biblical mode and meaning of the word *baptizo*. He simply thought that requiring enough water to immerse everyone being baptized was just too impractical (the *argument of inconvenience*). The real motivating factor for Calvin’s rejection of immersion as the only acceptable mode of baptism, as ridiculous as it seems, is apparent. Calvin hated the Baptists and wanted them all eliminated by simply having them executed.

The Geneva Bible and The Bishop’s Bible were motivated by the desire to counteract the *Free Church Movement* (also later known as the *Separatist Movement*) that was greatly advanced by the publication of the Tyndale Bible. Luther and Calvin continued the Theonomic view of the Church following Augustine’s Preterist view of Eschatology. The word PRETERIST comes from the Latin word PRAETER, meaning PAST or BEYOND. This view holds that John’s prophecies regarding the end-times referred to events of his own day, about 90 A.D. In this view, the Church was already in the Kingdom Age (the one-thousand year time span was later allegorized away from a literal one-thousand years). The Church in this view was both a governing force ruling both secularly and spiritually as a *State Church*. This is what Calvin established in Geneva, Luther in Germany, and the Church of England in England and Scotland. Catholicism was the *State Church* almost everywhere else in Europe. A primary issue of the Reformation was the separation of these various sects of Reformed churches from the *State Church* of Roman Catholicism.

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<sup>18</sup> Christian, John T., *A History of the Baptists Together with Some Account of Their Principles and Practices - Vol. I* (Texarkana, Ark-Tex., Bogard Press 1992), page 112-113

However, in almost every case, these new sects simply established their own reformed *State Churches*. The bad Ecclesiology of most of the Reformers did not change much. In the midst of this were the Baptists, Presbyterians, Free Church of Scotland, Anglican Separatists, and Free Lutherans who altogether rejected the idea of a *State Church* and opposed it through preaching, teaching, and writings. Tyndale was correct in his view of the Church as consisting only in local congregations and a separation of these churches from State interference.

The Geneva Bible was filled with marginal notes of Calvinism. The Free Presbyterians used the Geneva Bible because of Calvin's doctrines of election and predestination. The high churchmen of the Church of England developed the Bishops Bible (first published in 1568 A.D. and revised in 1572 A.D., also called the Great Bible because of its huge size) to be used in the Church of England to counteract the Free Presbyterian view of church government (the view that each local church was governed by a group of elected "lay elders"<sup>19</sup>). The translation of John 3:21-22 from the Bishops Bible is below and follows the precedent of Wycliffe in transliterating the Greek *baptizo* into the English *baptize*.

“<sup>22</sup> After these thynges, came Iesus and his disciples into the lande of Iurie, and there he taryed with the, & baptized.<sup>23</sup> And Iohn also baptized in Enon, besides Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized” (John 3:21-22).

The influence of the rationalism of Calvinism was a transitional issue in systematic theology and in the development of *Sacramental View* of sprinkling in infant baptism as opposed to the *Ordinance View* of Baptists by immersion. Calvin's Reformed Systematic Theology was reformed Augustinianism, which was Roman Catholic Systematic Theology. However, Calvin continued using Augustine's deductive methodology (known as *Aristotelian Syllogism*). Without going into too much depth, Calvin's Soteriology is based upon one major presupposition – only certain people are chosen by God to be saved. These are called “the elect.” From that *wrong* presupposition, the rest of Calvin's theology *logically* proceeds. Although Calvin rejected baptismal regeneration, infant baptism was the first step in the process of salvation of the “elect” (the *Ordo Salutis*). Through infant baptism, the infant was baptized into the “body of Christ” (the State Church), which causes the infant to be *in Christ*. There was no salvation apart from being part of the Church.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops'\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops'_Bible)

“But as it is now our purpose to discourse of the visible Church, let us learn, from her single title of Mother, how useful, nay, how necessary the knowledge of her is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceive us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourish us at her breasts, and, in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Mt. 22:30).”<sup>20</sup>

Calvin’s discussions on baptism are so conflicted and convoluted that it often appears he is arguing with himself. It amazes me that those fascinated with Calvin’s theology do not see the numerous contradictions between his statements rejecting regeneration through water baptism and some degree of efficacy in the sacrament.

“Then, again, when they {*the Anabaptists*} ask us what faith for several years followed our baptism, that they may thereby prove that our baptism was in vain, since it is not sanctified unless the word of the promise is received with faith, our answer is, that being blind and unbelieving, we for a long time did not hold the promise which was given us in baptism, but that still the promise, as it was of God, always remained fixed, and firm, and true. Although all men should be false and perfidious, yet God ceases not to be true (Rom. 3:3, 4); though all were lost, Christ remains safe. We acknowledge, therefore, that at that time baptism profited us nothing, since in us the offered promise, without which baptism is nothing, lay neglected. Now, when by the grace of God we begin to repent, we accuse our blindness and hardness of heart in having been so long ungrateful for his great goodness. But we do not believe that the promise itself has vanished, we rather reflect thus: God in baptism promises the remission of sins, and will undoubtedly perform what he has promised to all believers. That promise was offered to us in baptism, let us therefore embrace it in faith. In regard to us, indeed, it was long buried on account of unbelief; now, therefore, let us with faith receive it. Wherefore, when the Lord invites the Jewish people to repentance, he gives no injunction concerning another circumcision, though (as we have said) they were circumcised by a wicked and sacrilegious hand, and had long lived in the same impiety. All he urges is conversion of heart. For how much soever the covenant might have been violated by them, the symbol of the covenant always remained, according to the appointment of the Lord, firm and inviolable. Solely, therefore, on the condition of repentance, were they restored to the covenant which God had once made with them in

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<sup>20</sup> Calvin, John, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.html>)



circumcision, though this which they had received at the hand of a covenant-breaking priest, they had themselves as much as in them lay polluted and extinguished.”<sup>21</sup> (Words in Curly Brackets { } added)

Calvin’s view of infant baptism *sealed* the infant into the “Covenant” (the view that the *State Church* replaces National Israel as the benefactors of the Abrahamic Covenant). He therefore *logically* equates infant baptism with circumcision and *logically* replaces circumcision with infant baptism. I have already shown unequivocally that no one, including Abraham, entered the Abrahamic Covenant through circumcision. Infant circumcision was a physical sign of identification with national Israel and a reminder of the responsibility of the “blessing and curse” of the Mosaic Covenant. National Israel was a composite of Jews saved by faith, like Abraham, and individual Jews who had not understood the *Gospel in the Law*. Nonetheless, the Mosaic Covenant was made with national Israel and the “blessing and curse” of the Mosaic Covenant would come to national Israel according to their faithfulness in keeping or enforcing/adjudicating the “statutes and judgments” *as a nation*. The promise of the Mosaic Covenant, of which circumcision is a *sign* and a *seal*, is therefore “blessing” when obedient and “curse” (chastisement) when disobedient. The promise of the Mosaic Covenant was NOT salvation. Infant circumcision never assured that any child would be saved one day. Yet this is how Calvin *logically* equates infant circumcision with infant baptism.

“Now, if we are to investigate whether or not baptism is justly given to infants, will we not say that the man trifles, or rather is delirious, who would stop short at the element of water, and the external observance, and not allow his mind to rise to the spiritual mystery? If reason is listened to, it will undoubtedly appear that baptism is properly administered to infants as a thing due to them. The Lord did not anciently bestow circumcision upon them without making them partakers of all the things signified by circumcision. He would have deluded his people with mere imposture, had he quieted them with fallacious symbols: the very idea is shocking. He distinctly declares, that the circumcision of the infant will be instead of a seal of the promise of the covenant. But if the covenant remains firm and fixed, it is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day, than to the children of the Jews under the Old Testament. Now, if they are partakers of the thing signified, how can they be denied the sign? If they obtain the reality, how can they be refused the figure? The external sign is so united in the sacrament

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Book Fourth, chapter 15, paragraph 17, page 802

with the word, that it cannot be separated from it: but if they can be separated, to which of the two shall we attach the greater value? Surely, when we see that the sign is subservient to the word, we shall say that it is subordinate, and assign it the inferior place. Since, then, the word of baptism is destined for infants, why should we deny them the sign, which is an appendage of the word? This one reason, could no other be furnished, would be amply sufficient to refute all gainsayers. The objection, that there was a fixed day for circumcision, is a mere quibble. We admit that we are not now, like the Jews, tied down to certain days; but when the Lord declares, that though he prescribes no day, yet he is pleased that infants shall be formally admitted to his covenant, what more do we ask?”<sup>22</sup>

As far as Calvin was concerned, the mode of Baptist, whether by immersion in water, pouring on of water, or the sprinkling of water was of no consequence to his *Sacramental View*. Calvin gave that permission to Reformed churches based on logic. Once a logical argument was found to support both infant baptisms by sprinkling, then the search for *proof texts* to support the presuppositional argument began.

“Whether the person baptised is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term *baptise* means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive Church.”<sup>23</sup>

In this statement, Calvin seeks to justify two practices that existed within Roman Catholicism that he wanted to continue.

1. Infant Baptism
2. Sprinkling or pouring as the mode of baptism

Although Calvin understood and stated that “it is evident that the term *baptise* means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive Church,” he sought to justify a departure from that practice in the sprinkling of infants of the basis of a logical argument derived from a perverted view of *Sola Scriptura*. There were two basic theological positions of *Sola Scriptura* coming out of the Reformation. One said, *whatever the Bible does not disallow, we allow*. The other said, *whatever the Bible confirms, we confirm*. Neither position was

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<sup>22</sup> Calvin, John, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book fourth, chapter 16, paragraph 5, pages 809-810

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Book fourth, chapter 15, paragraph 19, page 804

immune from the imposition of presuppositions and proof-texting. Those coming out of Roman Catholicism were especially prone to two other faulty methodologies - the *imposition of presuppositions* and *proof-texting*. Calvin's argument was that the Scriptures did not *disallow* infant baptism by sprinkling and therefore infant baptism by sprinkling should be *allowed* (the *argument of silence*).

Calvin hated the Baptists and certainly did not want to become a Baptist. Infant baptism was the place where Calvin drew his *line in the sand* for his so-called *Reformation* of Roman Catholicism. He understood that if he could not defend the practice of infant baptism by sprinkling, by condescending he would admit of necessity that the Baptists were justified in rejecting the infant sprinklings of new converts and the necessity of re-baptizing these people after they confessed Christ. The Baptists did not view this as a *re-baptism* since infant sprinkling was never a real baptism in the first place. Since Calvin had been supporting the persecution and killing of Baptist for years because the Baptists rejected infant sprinkling as a baptism, he could not cross that line without condemning himself for his own barbaric injustices against them. Ulrich Zwingli (1484 – 1531 A.D.) in Switzerland, a contemporary of Calvin, came to this same point of departure in his reformation of Roman Catholicism. Zwingli was unwilling to cross this line. He also persecuted and had the Baptists murdered. This is a common pattern among Reformed theologians of this time-period.

Two texts are offered as *proof texts* by Reformed theologians to support baptism by sprinkling (which is a contradiction in terms) –Ezekiel 36:24-29 and the reference to the Ezekiel text in Hebrews 10:15-22.

“<sup>24</sup> For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. <sup>28</sup> And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. <sup>30</sup> And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. <sup>31</sup> Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. <sup>32</sup> Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the

Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. <sup>33</sup> Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded” (Ezekiel 36:24-33).

The Reformers’ beliefs regarding the Church (Ecclesiology) caused them to see all of God’s promises to national Israel transferred to the Church. They viewed the Church as a universal (worldwide) Theonomic entity that would one day govern the world (Amillennialism). Therefore, they viewed themselves already in the Kingdom Age and their reformations as advancing their Theonomic Universal Church to its appointed place of ultimate authority and rule over the whole earth. From that false perspective, they viewed the prophecies of Ezekiel chapter thirty-six as already fulfilled and they viewed themselves as the reformers who were sanctifying the Name of God in the world. In this view, they saw themselves justified in killing people that opposed their divinely appointed authority in that they were merely *purging the kingdom of reprobates*.<sup>24</sup> Bad theology leads to the grossness of offenses against our fellowman and then justifies those offenses.

The trouble with using Hebrews 10:22 to justify sprinkling as a form of baptism is that to do so one must take it out of the context of the previous verses in Hebrews chapter nine. The statement of Hebrews 9:15-28 also clarifies Ezekiel’s prophetic statement regarding *sprinkling* with pure water without customary mingling of sacrificial blood for *sanctification* (this sprinkling was not for salvation). In Hebrews 9:24-28, Jesus is presented as the Perfect Offerer and His Blood as the Perfect Offering for sin.

“<sup>15</sup> And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. <sup>16</sup> For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. <sup>17</sup> For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. <sup>18</sup> Whereupon neither the first *testament* {*Mosaic Covenant*} was dedicated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, <sup>20</sup> Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament {*Mosaic Covenant*} which God hath enjoined unto you. <sup>21</sup> Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. <sup>22</sup> And almost all things are by the law purged with

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<sup>24</sup> Calvin, John, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book Third, chapter 23, paragraph 1, page 582

blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. <sup>23</sup> *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: <sup>25</sup> Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; <sup>26</sup> For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: <sup>28</sup> So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:15-28).

This then leads us to the introductory statements in Hebrews chapter ten regarding the perfect, *once-for-all* sacrifice of Jesus.

“<sup>10</sup> By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. <sup>11</sup> And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: <sup>12</sup> But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; <sup>13</sup> From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. <sup>15</sup> *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, <sup>16</sup> *This is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; <sup>17</sup> And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. <sup>18</sup> Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:10-18).

The fact that Jesus has offered His Blood as the final, *once-for-all* perfect sacrifice explains why God says through Ezekiel, “<sup>25</sup> Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*” (Ezekiel 36:25-27). This text does not teach baptism by sprinkling. This text teaches that Kingdom Age *sanctification* (as is Church Age sanctification, I John 1:7-9) is

available based upon a finished work of redemption in the complete propitiation of God by the one offering of Jesus Christ (I John 2:2).

### CONTEXT-CONTEXT-CONTEXT!

“<sup>19</sup> Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; <sup>21</sup> And *having* an high priest over the house of God; <sup>22</sup> Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:14-22).