

to come up (ANABMNO) into the chariot to sit with him. After some time they came to some water, and the eunuch requested baptism. Philip having agreed to perform the rite, the eunuch ordered the chariot stopped; and both the eunuch and Philip got down or descended (KATABAINO) from the chariot and went to or into (EIS) the water, where Philip baptized him (verse 38). When they came up or ascended (ANABAINO) from or out of (EK) the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away (verse 39).

It should frankly be recognized that the act of descending into the water and the act of ascending out of the water tell us nothing about the mode in which baptism itself was performed, since both men descended into the water and ascended out of the water, and they surely did not immerse each other! The text simply tells us that they both descended into the water before the baptism, and they both ascended out of the water after the baptism. But how the baptism was actually performed is not described. One may with propriety ask what they were doing in the water if immersion was not intended, or one may attempt to argue from the meaning of BAPTIZO as it was used in the classical Greek, but speculations and arguments from etymology do not constitute evidence as to the mode employed.

I Corinthians 10:2 tells us that all of the Israelites who participated in the Exodus "were baptized into/unto/to (EIS) Moses by (EN) the cloud and by (EN) the sea."

Rather than putting a strain on this passage (and on our own credulity) by attempting to find some way in which the Israelites were immersed in or poured upon or sprinkled by the cloud and the sea, it would probably be better to find in this use of BAPTIZO the idea of God identifying the Israelites with Moses (as disciples with their master) by means of the cloud and the sea (the pillar of cloud and the Red Sea), which were symbols of that identification. What then can we conclude from the New Testament usage of BAPTIZO?

Of the original 77 uses of BAPTIZO in the books of the New Testament, the list of 17 uses that at first glance appeared to hold promise of relevance for the mode of baptism must be cut to 9, since 8 of the 17 merely specify the element used in ritual baptism, namely water.

Of these 9 uses, 3 (Matthew 3:6, Mark 1:5, Mark 1:9) speak of baptism as taking place in the Jordan River, but do not tell us anything definite about the mode of baptism.

Of the remaining 6 uses, the following may be said:

One (Matthew 3:16) speaks of Jesus going up from the water of the Jordan River after His baptism by John, and thus tells us nothing definitive about mode.

One (Acts 8:38-39) speaks of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch both descending into the water and both ascending out of the water, and thus tells us nothing definitive about the mode.

One (John 3:23) speaks of John baptizing in a place where there were "many waters," but tells us nothing specific about mode.