

Reconsidering Mark 10:38–39: Drinking the Cup and Becoming Drunk?

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Exegetes recognize that the metaphor 'drink the cup' in Jesus's challenge to James and John is a well-known figure found in the Hebrew Bible that signifies either doom or blessing, depending on the context. All recognize that in Mark 10:38–39 it means Jesus's looming violent execution. However, the precise import of the second part of Jesus's saying that involves *baptizō* and *baptisma* has eluded exegetes, though it clearly reinforces the idea of doom. In contrast to sacramental suggestions about this baptism, or that it relates to John's rite or to metaphorical deadly floods, this article proposes that Mark used an informal sense of *baptizō* for drunkenness, meaning that Jesus challenged James and John with two conceptually related figures of speech from the Hebrew Bible for impending disaster: drinking the cup and becoming drunk.

You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow. A cup of horror and desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. (Ezek. 23:33)

Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.' (Jer. 25:15)

Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land: the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Jer. 13:13b)

O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering. (Isa. 51:17b)

[B]ut to you also the cup shall pass; you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare. (Lam. 4:21b)

Similar terminology is seen in the markedly Semitic Apocalypse:

He also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger. (Rev. 14:10a)

God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. (Rev. 16:19b)

One of the Hebrew terms for drunkenness, *šikkārôn* (שִׁכָּרוֹן), found in Ezek. 23:33 and Jer. 13:13b, is only used metaphorically in the Hebrew Bible, and it conveys the idea of coming disaster, parallel to drinking a cup. Jesus, then, might well have challenged the brothers with a cup and drunkenness. The following conjecture for Mark 10:38 in Hebrew can in no way prove Jesus's *ipsissima verba*, but it can perhaps stimulate thought about the verse's original language.

הַתּוֹכְלוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת אֶת-הַכּוֹס אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שׂתָּהּ, Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?

אוּ אֶת הַשְּׂכָרוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְשַׁתְּכֵר הַתְּשַׁכְּרוּ? Or the drunkenness which I am drunken, can you be drunken?¹

This article proposes that Mark 10:38–39 uses *baptizō* in its sense of drunken, together with the newly-coined verbal noun, *baptisma*, to render Jesus’s original Semitic challenge of cup and drunkenness. This article discusses Mark’s informal writing style, as well as a metaphorical sense of *baptizō* for drunkenness. Examples from ancient authors are presented that demonstrate *baptizō*’s distinct sense of drunkenness. In addition, scholarly comments about Mark 10:38–39 are discussed in light of the possibility that Jesus intended a cup and drunkenness to refer to his impending horrific ordeal.

Mark’s writing style

Widespread recognition of the Markan priority has led to the flourishing of Markan studies. The spotlight has revealed Mark’s various characteristics, including a ‘Semitic flavour of the Greek’ (whether by direct translation of Semitic sources, or via the LXX), its vividness, its ability to engage hearers, and its style that is unpolished and non-literary.² Some argue that the informal style demonstrates that Mark intended his work to be read aloud to audiences, not alone in private.³ Mark’s tendency for repetition⁴ is also taken to support this suggestion. Listeners must cope with an ongoing flow of aural information, so repeating ideas helps listeners grasp the story. Mark 10:38–39 repeats drink the cup I drink, and baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ensuring that hearers fail not to grasp Jesus’s challenge.

Robert Stein explains that Jesus’s challenge of cup and baptism is in the form of a synonymous parallelism,⁵ a form of expression found frequently in the Hebrew Bible in which an A line (drink the cup) is followed by a B line (a baptism with which

¹ The Hebrew A line is from the Delitzsch Hebrew NT translation which, for this phrase, aligns closely with the Greek, see the Accordance XII, *Delitzsch Hebrew NT* software module, version 2.4. The proposed Hebrew B line reflects the Hebrew Bible’s terminology for drunkenness.

² C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, The Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, ed. by C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, 13th printing 2000, digital form 2005), 7, 10, 20–21; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 25–26; Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Mark, Notes on the Gospel in Its Literary and Cultural Settings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 54–55; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 9–10. Accordance ebook; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. by Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 16n24; Rodney J. Decker, *Mark 1–8: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament, ed. by Martin M. Culy (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), xxi.

³ Lane, *Mark*, 26–27; Bryan, *Preface to Mark*, 55–56, 60–61; France, *Mark*, 9–11, 16–17; David E. Garland, *A Theology of Mark’s Gospel: Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament Series, ed. by Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 89.

⁴ Cranfield, *Mark*, 21; Bryan, *Preface to Mark*, 55–56; Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. by Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 47.

⁵ Stein, *Mark*, 484.

to be baptized) for emphasis.⁶ It is probably impossible to prove whether Mark's source for this saying was already in Greek form, or if instead it was in Semitic form (Aramaic or Hebrew). The Papias tradition⁷ that Mark was closely associated with Peter and that he took notes as Peter preached is too vague to narrow down where the Mark 10:35–40 material originated. But the overall informal style of Mark tends to support the notion that Mark himself might have chosen *baptizō* in its informal sense of drunken, which in turn implies that Mark himself rendered a Semitic source rather than that he received a developed Greek translation. In any case, this informal sense of *baptizō* is not frivolous since it signifies Jesus's passion.

The parallel in Matthew 20:20–23 presents a reworking of Mark's version, though some phrases remain identical to Mark.⁸ Matthew makes the mother of James and John the source of the request and he omits mention of baptism. In John Nolland's analysis of Matthean use of Mark, Matthew tends to be 'considerably more conservative in the reproduction of the words of Jesus than in the rendering of [Markan] narrative.'⁹ If so, then omission of Jesus's terms *baptizō* and *baptisma* may indicate that Matthew did not consider them important, much less sacramental, but rather an unneeded repetition. The cup implies a metaphorical 'drunkenness' effect in any case, so if cup and baptism do refer to drinking and drunkenness, then the repetition could be dropped. As well, Matthew may simply have resisted using *baptizō* for drunken, even if that was a legitimate sense, preferring instead to reserve the word in his work for more 'noble' senses. In contrast, Mark's 'blue collar' writing style may have left him unconcerned about using *baptizō* in its sense for drunken. While several issues in the foregoing discussion are speculative, they find support if one agrees that *baptizō* could bear the metaphorical sense of drunken.

***Baptizō* and metaphorical senses**

Nearly thirty years after publishing his landmark book, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, James Dunn offered an insightful comment on methods of exegesis in his article "'Baptized" as Metaphor' that seems applicable to Mark 10:38–39:

An interesting feature of much exegesis of 'baptismal passages' in the New Testament is the curious concern (or so it would seem) to reduce to the minimum any metaphorical usage. It is almost as though, in order to protect the literal reference of the language 'baptized into', any metaphorical significance of associated or accompanying language must be diminished or denied with equal vigour.¹⁰

⁶ See also, James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry, Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 1–58.

⁷ Stein, *Mark*, 1–2; Cranfield, *Mark*, 8; France, *Mark*, 8, 39–40; Bryan, *Preface to Mark*, 155.

⁸ Compare Matt. 20:22b with Mark 10:38b and Matt. 20:23b with Mark 10:40.

⁹ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC; (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 10. Accordance electronic ed.

¹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, "'Baptized" as Metaphor', *Baptism, the New Testament, and the Church*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSS 171 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 298.

While Dunn does not comment specifically on Jesus's metaphorical cup and baptism, he nevertheless makes clear that he observes widespread exegetical aversion to metaphorical senses of baptism. If so, then this article's proposal indeed faces a high hurdle for acceptance, since it suggests that Jesus's figure of baptism in Mark 10:38 is actually composed of two language layers of metaphor, a) an original Semitic metaphorical expression of drunken for impending disaster that is b) represented in Greek by *baptizō*, expressed in an informal metaphorical sense of drunken.

Nevertheless, comments by John Nolland on the Lukan parallel *baptisma baptisthēnai* (Luke 12:50), 'to be baptized [with] a baptism', are enlightening on this question. In Nolland's view, '[t]here is no sufficient reason for making recourse either to the baptism of John or to Christian baptism to account for the wording of the text here. While the precise imagery must belong to the Greek language phase of the tradition, the representation of the threat of disaster in terms of a flood of water is well attested in the OT.'¹¹ The point to make is that in the early Semitic phase of tradition, Mark 10:38–39 might well have used the detrimental OT cup and drunkenness to describe Jesus's passion. Mark makes use of various Semitic terms throughout his gospel, so it seems likely that he was familiar with cup and drunkenness metaphors. Yet, Mark's informal writing style would well accommodate the informal sense of *baptizō* for drunken in the subsequent Greek phase of tradition. The following discussion indeed demonstrates the widespread awareness of this sense among Greek speakers, very likely including Mark's intended audience.

Ancient writers, baptizō and drunkenness

Everett Ferguson's book, *Baptism in the Early Church*,¹² presents metaphorical uses of *baptizō* from non-Christian authors, including occurrences for drunkenness or stupefaction. Among the authors Ferguson presents using this sense are Plato, Aristophon, Philo, Josephus, Plutarch, Lucian, and Achilles Tatius. A point to note is that cognates of *methyō* for drunkenness were well-known by such authors as Plato, Philo, Josephus and Plutarch, and yet they used *baptizō* in this sense as well. The discussion below includes nine citations that demonstrate *baptizō*'s sense of drunkenness through a diachronic range from Plato to beyond the second century CE. The translations of T. J. Conant's long-respected work on the subject are furnished in footnotes,¹³ together with Greek text from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.¹⁴

¹¹ The examples listed are 2 Sam 22:5; Pss. 69:2–3, 15; 32:6; 124:4–5. John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35b (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 708–709. Accordance ebook.

¹² Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

¹³ T. J. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein Philologically and Historically Investigated* (New York: American Bible Union, 1864).

¹⁴ *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* ®, <<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/>> [accessed 26 January 2018]

1. Plato (c. 429–347 BCE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Plato includes a quotation showing the metaphorical use of *baptizō* for drunkenness: “I am myself one of those who yesterday was drunk [βεβαπτισμένων]” (Symposium 176B).’¹⁵

Ferguson straightforwardly explains that Plato used *baptizō* in the sense of drunkenness.¹⁶ If so, then this sense existed centuries before the NT and at the very least would have become as widely known as Plato’s writings. A point to note is that Plato framed his sentence with *baptizō* standing on its own, without supporting terms such as ‘with wine’. In other words, Plato evidently was confident that by mentioning *baptizō* alone his readers would grasp the sense of drunkenness. This may indicate that in Plato’s generation *baptizō* was already known in this sense.

2. Aristophon (fourth century BCE)

Ferguson writes: ‘[Athenaeus] quotes a line from the fourth-century BC comic writer Aristophon’s play *Philinides*, “My master . . . having soused [βαπτίσας] me thoroughly, set me free” (11, 472d).’¹⁷

This example involves a servant girl who was intoxicated by her master.¹⁸ Ferguson’s source is the citation of Aristophon by Athenaeus (c. 170–c. 230 CE), and this arguably provides diachronic confirmation for *baptizō*’s sense of drunkenness through the time period of the NT’s writing. Use of ‘souse’ in the English translation is instructive because this word has more than one sense: pickled for foods, drenched for objects, and drunk in the context of drinking. In this case, souse was evidently chosen for its sense of drunkenness, but possibly also to suggest a sense of drenched, whether that sense was originally intended by Aristophon or not. Regardless, the context of Aristophon’s original usage points to the necessity of recognizing various distinct senses for *baptizō*, just as for souse, including the sense of drunkenness.

3. Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE–c. 50 CE)

Ferguson writes of Philo: ‘In accord with his classical counterparts he writes of some “before they are completely overwhelmed [βαπτισθῆναι]” with intoxication (Contemplative Life 5.46).’¹⁹

¹⁵ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 53; Conant translates: ‘For I myself am one of those who yesterday were OVERWHELMED (BAPTIZED).’ (ex. 146, pp. 69–70); Καὶ γὰρ αὐτός εἰμι τῶν χθὲς βεβαπτισμένων.

¹⁶ Joseph Ysebaert remarks, ‘in the sense of “to drench in wine”, “to make drunk”’, *Greek Baptismal Terminology: Its Origins and Early Development*, English translation by M. F. Foran Hedlund (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V., 1962), 13; Ferguson notes the Loeb translation, ‘got such a soaking’ by W. R. M. Lamb in *Plato*, vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

¹⁷ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 54; Conant translates: ‘Then WHELMING (BAPTIZING) potently, he set me free.’ (ex. 150, p. 72); Εἴτ’ ἐλευθέραν ἀφῆκε βαπτίσας ἐρρωμένως.

¹⁸ Conant, *Baptizein*, 72. Ysebaert argues that *baptizō* means ‘to draw’ in this example. Ysebaert, *Baptismal Terminology*, 14.

¹⁹ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 57; Conant translates: ‘And I know some, who, when they become slightly intoxicated, before they are completely OVERWHELMED (BAPTIZED) provide, by contribution and tickets, a carousal for

Ferguson’s remark about Philo’s usage, “‘overwhelmed’ with intoxication’, differs from his remark about Plato. If one follows Ferguson’s reading for Plato above, then this usage might simply be read as, ‘before they are completely drunk’. Ferguson’s remark indeed reveals *baptizō*’s character of expressing an overwhelming effect, which is drunkenness in this case. The Greek text of Philo, like Plato, lacks additional terminology associated with *baptizō*. Both Plato and Philo evidently were confident that readers would grasp *baptizō*’s sense of drunkenness simply by use of the word itself, without supplementary words such as Ferguson’s ‘with intoxication’. Philo used *baptisthēnai*, which is identical to one of the verb forms in Mark 10:38 (also Luke 12:50). So, while *baptisthēnai* is used in relation to water baptism in the NT, Philo’s usage at the very least supports the possibility that Mark 10:38–39 speaks of drunkenness.

4. Josephus (37–c. 100 CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Josephus further represents the Hellenistic use of immersion as a metaphor for drunkenness: “Observing him in this condition, plunged [sunken, βεβαπτισμένον] by drunkenness into [εἰς] unconsciousness and sleep” (Antiquities 10.169 [10.9.4]).’²⁰

G. B. Caird observes that the lifecycle of metaphors includes an origin, then repeated use as a ‘stock or faded metaphor’, and finally the stage as a ‘dead metaphor’ where users no longer are mindful of the origin of that sense of the word.²¹ One wonders whether Greek speakers of Josephus’s day, four centuries after Plato, always mentally pictured some kind of immersion when they used *baptizō* for drunkenness. Or perhaps, like modern English usage of a colorful array of terms for drunken, such as three sheets to the wind, under the table, plastered, smashed, wrecked, sloshed, soused, blotto, blitzed, stewed, fried, pickled, tanked, bombed, hammered and blasted,²² they simply used *baptizō* for drunkenness without complex philological reasoning, and without recalling other contemporaneous senses that *baptizō* bore.

Regarding Josephus’s phrase, *bebaptismenon eis anaisthēsan kai hypnon hypotēs methēs*, Ferguson makes no remarks on its features but simply renders it as: ‘plunged by drunkenness into unconsciousness and sleep’, recalling Conant’s ‘plunged (baptized) by drunkenness into stupor and sleep’. Conant’s Greek text for

the morrow.’ (ex. 142, p. 68); οἷδα δέ τινας, [οἱ] ἐπειδὴν ἀκροθώρακες γένωνται, πρὶν τελέως βαπτισθῆναι, τὸν εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν πότον ἐξ ἐπιδόσεως καὶ συμβολῶν προευτρεπιζομένους.

²⁰ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 59; Conant translates: ‘Seeing him in this condition, and PLUNGED (BAPTIZED) by drunkenness into stupor and sleep, Ishmael leaping up, with his ten friends, slays Gedaliah and those reclining with him at the banquet.’ (ex. 118, p. 57); Θεασάμενος δ’ αὐτὸν οὕτως ἔχοντα καὶ βεβαπτισμένον εἰς ἀναισθησίαν καὶ ὕπνον ὑπὸ τῆς μέθης.

²¹ ‘But by repeated use [a metaphor] becomes a stock or faded metaphor, and at that point the dictionary will list the new reference as part of its sense, labelling it as figurative. The final stage is the dead metaphor, when users are no longer conscious of the word’s origin, and the label (fig.) drops from the dictionary definition. A large proportion of the word-stock of any language will prove on scrutiny to have come into existence in this fashion.’ G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 66.

²² Online Thesaurus for the Oxford Dictionary; <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/thesaurus/drunken>> [accessed 14 January 2018]

this phrase is identical to that of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* digital text. Evidently, both Ferguson and Conant associate the prepositional phrase *hypo tēs methēs* directly with *bebaptismenon*, which supports their modal interpretation of the verb. While this reading seems possible, in light of the earlier stand-alone attestations of *baptizō* for drunkenness by Plato and Philo it seems equally possible that *bebaptismenon* directly conveys the sense of drunkenness rather than the modal action of plunge. One could reasonably interpret Josephus’s phrase as:

Inebriated to unconsciousness and sleep by the heavy drinking.

Concerning Ferguson’s construal, a drinker’s inebriation may progress steadily into stupor, yet the concept of ‘plunged’ seems overly sudden and violent as a description of that progress. Perhaps that is why Ferguson also includes the more serene ‘sunken’ in brackets.²³ If so, then Ferguson seems to tacitly admit that *baptizō* bears various nuanced senses ranging from vigorous actions (plunge), to powerful effects (drunken), to enduring states (sunken). If that is so, then while plunge may be one of *baptizō*’s recognized senses, that would not mean it is intended, or appropriate, every time one reads it. Ferguson’s choice of plunge for *baptizō* in this case, while conceivable, is not better than drunken. Since in this case Josephus was writing historical narrative, not a comic play, there would be no obvious call for clever double meanings. Josephus used the singular form of the verb *bebaptismenon* that echoes Plato’s plural form *bebaptismenōn*, and Ferguson agrees that Plato’s usage means drunk. If so, then one is well-justified in suggesting that Josephus used *bebaptismenon* to express drunkenness directly.

Both Philo and Josephus were quite familiar with cognates of *methyō* for drunkenness, and yet both also used *baptizō* in the context of drunkenness, showing that there were Jews at the time of the NT’s writing who knew and used that sense. So, although the earlier LXX lacks *baptizō* in the sense of drunken, contemporary Jews did use this sense, and this makes credible the suggestion that Mark 10:38–39 likewise uses *baptizō* in this sense.

5. Plutarch (46–120 CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Plutarch’s most frequent metaphorical usage of *baptizō* is with reference to drunkenness. As might be expected, this usage occurs in his Table Talk: a body not sodden with (or under the influence of — ἀβάπτιστον) wine (6 int. = Moralia 686B)’²⁴

Plutarch’s works were written closely in time to that of NT, and this would indicate that Greek speakers of that period were familiar with *baptizō*’s sense of drunken, probably including Mark’s audience. Ferguson seems to refer to the Loeb translation

²³ Compare, “‘to sink into” sleep, intoxication, impotence’. Albrecht Oepke, ‘βάπτω, βαπτίζω [. . .]’, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 530–535.

²⁴ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 53; Conant translates: ‘For truly, a great provision for a day of enjoyment is a happy temperament of the body, un-WHELMED (un-BAPTIZED) and unencumbered.’ (ex. 144, p. 69); μέγα γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐημερίας ἐφόδιον εὐκρασία σώματος ἀβαπτίστου καὶ ἐλαφροῦ καὶ παρεστῶτος ἀνυπόπτως ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν.

that renders *abaptistou* as ‘not sodden with wine’.²⁵ Plutarch makes no explicit mention of wine in this sentence, but from the context he evidently assumes readers would understand that the word *abaptistou*, un-baptized, means ‘not drunk’. In any case, Ferguson here explains that *baptizō* bears the sense of ‘under the influence of’ which recognizes *baptizō*’s ability to convey causation of effects. Moreover, the English translational term ‘sodden’ bears various senses, including drunken, just as ‘soused’ bears several senses, including drunken. Thus, again, *baptizō* likewise bears several distinct senses, including drunken, that ought not be ignored or confused.

6. Plutarch (46–120 CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘a body not yet soaked (intoxicated — βεβαπτισμένον) (3.8.2 = *Moralia* 656D).’²⁶

The form of the verb in this case, *bebaptismenon*, is identical to the form in Josephus’s usage for drunkenness. Ferguson’s note in parentheses is that the intended sense is intoxicated, despite using the term ‘soaked’ in what appears to be a citation of the Loeb translation.²⁷ In any case, the translational term ‘soaked’, like ‘soused’ and ‘sodden’, bears several distinct senses, including drunken.

7. Plutarch (46–120 CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Plutarch writes of “those soused [βεβαπτισμένοις] by yesterday’s debauch” (*Cleverness of Animals* 23 = *Moralia* 975C).’²⁸

The context again clearly relates to drunkenness, even though Ferguson does not state directly that the intended meaning is drunk or intoxicated. Ferguson, like the Loeb translation, uses ‘soused’ with its multiple senses that includes drunken.²⁹

8. Lucian (c. 125–c. 180 CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Lucian represents the usage for the effects of drink: “When an old man drinks and Silenus takes possession of him, . . . he resembles one overwhelmed (sodden, βεβαπτισμένω)” (*Dionysus* 7).’³⁰

²⁵ Trans. by Hebert B. Hoffleit, *Plutarch’s Moralia*, vol. 8, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 453.

²⁶ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 53; Conant translates: ‘For of the slightly intoxicated only the intellect is disturbed; but the body is able to obey its impulses, being not yet OVERWHELMED (BAPTIZED).’ (ex. 143, pp. 68–69); τῶν γὰρ ἀκροθωράκων ἢ δίανοια μόνον τετάρακται, τὸ δὲ σῶμα ταῖς ὀρμαῖς ἐξυπηρετεῖν δύναται, μήπω βεβαπτισμένον.

²⁷ Trans. by Paul A. Clement, *Plutarch’s Moralia*, vol. 8, Loeb, 265.

²⁸ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 53; Conant translates: ‘So then, O Hercules, there is manifest stratagem, with guile; for the worthy man, himself sober as you see, purposely sets upon us while still affected with yesterday’s debauch, and OVERWHELMED (BAPTIZED).’ (ex. 145, p. 69); Κραιπαλώσι γὰρ ἔτι τὸ χθιζὸν καὶ βεβαπτισμένοις νήφων.

²⁹ Trans. by William C. Hembold, *Plutarch’s Moralia*, Vol. 12, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 415.

³⁰ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 54; Conant translates: ‘When an old man drinks, and Silenus takes possession of him, immediately he is mute for some time, and seems like one heavy-headed and WHELMED (BAPTIZED).’ (ex. 148, p. 71); ἐπειδὴν πῆ ὁ γέρων καὶ κατάσχη αὐτὸν ὁ Σιληνός, αὐτίκα ἐπὶ πολὺ ἄφωνός ἐστι καὶ καρηβαροῦντι καὶ βεβαπτισμένω ἔοικεν.

Ferguson renders *baptizō* again with ‘overwhelmed’ and adds in parentheses the term ‘sodden’ with its multiple senses, including drunken. Lucian describes the effect on an old man of drinking from a particular spring, becoming silent and like someone ‘heavy-headed and drunk’. Lucian’s usage stresses the specific sense of drunkenness for *baptizō* from other senses. In this episode, the man is involved with a spring and is baptized, not by immersion in it, nor by a purification washing with its waters, but by drinking from it and experiencing a powerful effect, stupefaction.

9. Achilles Tatius (second century CE)

Ferguson writes: ‘Overwhelmed [stupefied, *καταβαπτισας*] with the same drug (2.31.2).’³¹

Here *baptizō* describes the stupefying effect of a drug, and the compound form with the prefix *kata* probably stresses the adverse effect.

These five Greek authors and two Jewish authors made use of *baptizō* in the sense of drunken from four centuries before the writing of NT documents to a century after they were completed, demonstrating the soundness and plausibility of the proposal that Mark also used *baptizō* in the sense of drunken, which in turn recalls the Semitic metaphor of disaster. In addition, these examples also raise the question of why standard Greek references typically fail to note drunken among the distinct senses of *baptizō*.³² One wonders whether such works similarly reflect Dunn’s observation of exegetical aversion to metaphorical senses of *baptizō*. In any case, the modern English terms soused, sodden and soaked are recognized to bear various senses, including drunken. If so, one might well ask how many centuries *baptizō* should be metaphorically associated with drunkenness before it is finally judged a dead metaphor, simply meaning drunken without exciting a user’s concern about philological origins.

³¹ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 54; Conant translates: ‘And Satyrus had a remnant of the drug, with which he had put Conops to sleep. Of this, while serving us, he covertly pours a part into the last cup which he brought to Panthia; and she rising went into her bedchamber, and immediately fell asleep. But Leucippe had another chamber-servant; whom having WHELMED (BAPTIZED) with the same drug, Satyrus . . . comes to the third door, to the door-keeper; and him he laid prostrate with the same draught.’ (ex. 163, p. 79–80); ἦν τῷ αὐτῷ φαρμάκῳ καταβαπτισας.

³² For example, the Liddell, Scott, Jones Greek-English lexicon entry for *baptizō* includes: dip, plunge, of a trephine, to be drowned, to sink or disable ships, flooded the city, to be drenched, soaked in wine [why not *drunk?*], over head and ears in debt, getting into deep water, draw wine by dipping the cup in the bowl. In addition, a longstanding error going back to earliest editions is still found in the LSJ, where under *Baptistēs* the explanation ‘metaph. of the Passion, Ev.Luc. 12.50’ is mistakenly given. *Baptistēs* does not appear in Luke 12:50, leading one to question the accuracy of any other entry. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. by Sir Henry S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940). <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>> [accessed 20 January 2018]. Likewise, the new Brill dictionary lists for *baptizō*: to immerse, dip, submerge, to cause to sink, to baptize, to dive, to wash oneself, to be swallowed, drown, to make ablutions. For Plato’s example in *Symposium* 176b the Brill dictionary gives ‘immersed in wine’, Franco Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, eds of the English ed. Madeleine Goh and Chad Schroeder (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015). The BDAG likewise lists “‘soak” Pla., *Symp.* 176b in wine’, Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker, third ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Soaked in wine and immersed in wine appear to impose a flawed reading since the words ‘in wine’ are not in the Greek text.

The section of Ferguson's book that contains the above examples does not distinguish usages of *baptizō* for drunkenness from metaphorical usages for other unfavorable effects, such as being overwhelmed by the affairs of life, by circumstances, by debts, by a multitude of evils, by illness or magical arts, by passion, or by disasters.³³ Rather all such examples are listed together. To explain these adverse metaphorical usages, Ferguson ties the concept of 'a complete overwhelming effect on an object' to that of 'an object's engulfed position in a liquid': 'The use of *baptizō* does emphasize a total submersion, in the metaphorical sense no less than in the literal.'³⁴ Yet the adverse metaphorical examples that Ferguson presents seem to show that *baptizō* carried several senses, including drunkenness, which, contrary to Ferguson's analysis, simply were not amalgamated into a single, all-purpose submersion. Despite that, Ferguson reiterates:

These passages show that the metaphorical use of *baptizō* involved a derived sense 'to influence,' but a particular kind of influence. The verb expresses that something exercises a controlling influence that brings about a change of condition. This derived metaphorical sense does not mean that *baptizō* came to mean 'to influence controllingly however that was effected.' Rather, the point of departure for the metaphorical usage was the completeness or thoroughness of the action expressed in submersion.³⁵

In the ongoing baptism discussion, there are those who agree that *baptizō* was used in various derived senses, especially in the NT.³⁶ It seems reasonable to suppose that once a derivative sense is used regularly it becomes a ready option, not lacking importance as a secondary sense, but rather becoming a valid primary sense *for a particular context*. Ferguson agrees that *baptizō* has a derived sense of 'to influence' so that it 'exercises a controlling influence that brings about a change of condition'.³⁷ Yet, Ferguson subsequently seems to diminish the validity of *baptizō*'s derived senses by arguing that the 'action expressed in submersion' is the 'point of departure' for their use. But later Ferguson returns:

³³ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 52–55

³⁴ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 53.

³⁵ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 54.

³⁶ Compare Howard Marshall's discussion about John the Baptist's usage: 'Put otherwise, the verb does not so much draw attention to the mode of drenching (*sc.* by an act of immersion in water or otherwise) as to the fact of the drenching and the cleansing which it conveys. What John meant was "I have drenched you with water, but he will drench you with the Holy Spirit", or "I have cleansed/purified you with water, but he will cleanse/purify you with the Holy Spirit".', I. Howard Marshall, 'The Meaning of the Verb "Baptize"', *Dimensions of Baptism, Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSS 234 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 8–24.

³⁷ Ferguson characterizes James Dale's works on *baptizō* as unreliable in note 1 on page 38 of his book, yet Ferguson's terminology echoes Dale's summary: 'Whatever is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition of any object, is capable of baptizing that object; and by such change of character, state or condition does, in fact, baptize it.' James W. Dale, *Classic Baptism* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., fourth ed., 1867), 354.

Drinking wine might not seem appropriate to the image of immersion, but the point of comparison is being overwhelmed by the influence of the liquid.³⁸

Ferguson evidently argues that *baptizō* always conveys something of the image of immersion. Yet, ‘overwhelmed by influence’ is simply a different conceptual category than ‘the position of an object in a liquid’: the act of ‘imbibing’ alcohol is physically different from ‘immersing’ in a vat of alcohol, and the results that *baptizō* describes are different, an intoxicating effect versus an engulfed position in a liquid. Ferguson evidently would agree that both concepts convey ideas of totality, completeness and thoroughness, which could arguably be considered the essential ideas shouldered by *baptizō*. In summary, it seems that as much as Ferguson endeavors to explain otherwise, he shows that *baptizō* is not permanently sequestered within the ideas of immerse, submerge, or plunge, but rather that it also is used for a range of overwhelming effects, both abstract and physical, and this includes drunkenness.

Recent views on drinking the cup and being baptized

Commentators tend to impugn James and John as selfish glory-seekers because of their request for seats to the right and left of Jesus in glory.³⁹ Jesus’s response, however, seems to show that there is more going on in this episode than merely an obtuse maneuver for personal glory. Jesus’s reply, first of all, was that the brothers did not understand what they were asking, and this suggests somewhat more innocent ignorance than raw calculated cunning. Regardless, if the brothers’ request had been profoundly flawed, then Jesus probably could have quashed the matter with a stern rebuke. But Jesus did not deny that there would be places of honor to his right and left.⁴⁰ Instead, Jesus immediately challenged the brothers with the cup and baptism that he himself faces. This implies that, at the very least, Jesus knew that the conditions for appointment to those seats were the same as the horrific conditions set before him. Moreover, Jesus did not rebuke the brothers’ affirmative response, but instead agreed that they too would drink the cup and be baptized as he would be. While Jesus explained in verse 40 that it was not his prerogative to grant such appointments, he did not thereby exclude the brothers from their *possible* appointment. Jesus by no means denied the brothers’ request outright.⁴¹

Jesus’s question to the brothers follows his earlier challenge: ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it’ (Mark 8:34–35; see also 10:17–31). Jesus’s followers were challenged to self-denial by taking up cross, cup and baptism, just as Jesus. Neither cross, cup, nor baptism in these sayings were circumscribed to the exclusive soteriological domain of Jesus. From this vantage point, then, the cup and baptism in Mark 10:38 very likely were not referring to sacraments.

³⁸ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 54.

³⁹ France, *Mark*, 415–417; Strauss, *Mark*, 454–456; Lane, *Mark*, 378–379.

⁴⁰ France, *Mark*, 417.

⁴¹ Decker, *Mark*, 68.

Still, there are exegetes who take Jesus's question in Mark 10:38 to reflect sacramental concerns,⁴² leading some to assume that Jesus's question was meant to be answered 'no' by the brothers, that they could not drink the cup or be baptized with the baptism that Jesus faces.⁴³ William Lane sees the metaphorical cup in the OT designating divine judgment on human sin, and then states that in popular Greek usage baptism meant being overwhelmed by disaster or danger.⁴⁴ Lane considers John's baptism essential to explaining Jesus's usage and reads John's rite as 'God's judgment on human sin'. Thus, Lane takes Jesus's words of cup and baptism to refer to his voluntary sacrifice for the sins of humanity, something the brothers could not share. However, as noted above, Jesus did not exclude the brothers from the fate he faces. Indeed, for Jews, the great Maccabean conflict was an example of Torah-fearing Jews struggling and dying for a righteous cause, and Jesus evidently honored this struggle by going up to the temple during the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). In Mark 10:38 Jesus did not challenge the brothers with dying for the sins of the world, but rather with willingly facing undeserved certain death for a righteous cause. Assuredly, Jesus's willing passion would 'provide a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45) because Jesus's sinless humanity and incarnate divinity made him an unblemished, most holy 'lamb'. Thus, the deadly ordeal of cup and baptism that Jesus faced could be shared by others, but the ultimate significance of facing such an ordeal would by no means be identical.

Ferguson remarks on Mark 10:38 that 'the passage does not liken baptism to a death but death to a baptism' and adds that OT imagery of suffering is probably in mind.⁴⁵ Ferguson suggests that in this verse baptize draws on its usage for being drowned or overwhelmed, a thought similar to the BDAG's suggestion that Jesus asked, 'are you prepared to be drowned the way I'm going to be drowned?' David Garland similarly argues for the image of drowning, stating that Jesus will be submerged in suffering.⁴⁶ Also, Mark Strauss writes of 'Jesus being swept away in death by the events that will shortly unfold in Jerusalem' though he admits that use of baptism in the sense of suffering is obscure. Strauss mentions suffering in the Hebrew Bible as sometimes described by an overwhelming deluge of water, and that *baptizō* can carry the sense of being overwhelmed or deluged, noting that Josephus speaks of the rabble who overwhelmed (baptized) Jerusalem with misery in Jewish War 4.3.3 § 137, and that Isa. 21:4 LXX says lawlessness overwhelms.⁴⁷ Granting the Hebrew Bible's use of metaphors such as sweeping floods and up to the neck in deep waters to

⁴² Lane, *Mark*, 379–382; Strauss, *Mark*, 455–456; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002, ebook 2012), 205–206; Stein, *Mark*, 485.

⁴³ Cranfield, *Mark*, 337–339; Lane, *Mark*, 379–382; Strauss, *Mark*, 455–456; Edward W. Burrows, 'Baptism in Mark and Luke', *Baptism, the New Testament, and the Church*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSS 171 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 113.

⁴⁴ Lane's note 85 on popular Greek usage reads, 'Ps. 42:7; 49:3 (Symmachus used βαπτίζειν), 15; 69:2 (Aquila used βαπτίζειν), 15; Job 9:31 (Aquila used βαπτίζειν); 22:11; Isa. 43:2; Jonah 2:3–6. For the metaphor in the context of divine judgment see Isa. 30:27.'

⁴⁵ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 139.

⁴⁶ Garland, *Mark*, 423–425.

⁴⁷ Strauss, *Mark*, 455.

describe life-threatening dangers, this view is conceivable.⁴⁸ Yet, while the LXX makes no use of *baptizō* for drunkenness, at the same time its four occurrences do not tell of actual mortal danger by drowning either: Isa. 21:4 for being overwhelmed, 2 Kings 5:14 for Naaman bathing in the Jordan, Judith 12:7–9 for Judith bathing at a spring, and Sirach 34:30 for one who bathes due to contact with a corpse. While the drowning metaphor certainly conveys the distress of untimely death, its chief weakness in Mark 10:38 is its lack of association with the metaphor of the cup.

Regarding Isa. 21:4 LXX noted by Garland, Strauss and others, actually both Mark and Luke cite Isaiah five times and both cite the LXX Isaiah for three of their five citations.⁴⁹ Both Mark and Luke probably knew Isa. 21:4 LXX:

My heart wanders, and lawlessness overwhelms me;
my soul has turned to fear. (NETS)⁵⁰

This verse indeed demonstrates *baptizō*'s sense of 'overwhelming' detrimental effect. Yet, it seems impossible to prove that either Mark 10:38 or Luke 12:50 depend directly on this verse.⁵¹ However, since contemporary Greek speakers used *baptizō* in various detrimental contexts, direct dependence on Isa. 21:4 LXX by NT writers, or lack thereof, is not decisive.

Robert Stein notes that although the cup metaphor could refer to blessings, it far more frequently refers to suffering and death.⁵² Stein comments that the use of baptism to describe a terrible fate 'is not as familiar as the imagery of being overwhelmed by a watery flood (Ps. 42:7; Isa. 43:2)'.⁵³ Stein thinks it is doubtful that Jesus expected the brothers to understand his saying in light of their own baptism, but Stein does not clearly state how the challenge of baptism would have been understood by the brothers. Whether or not Stein thinks Jesus's challenge to the brothers was, at the time, intended to recall sacraments is unclear, but as mentioned above, in actual fact it seems unlikely; Jesus challenged the brothers to a grave ordeal. Stein does not explain what *baptizō* and *baptisma* mean, other than suffering and martyrdom.⁵⁴

Edward Burrows argues against the idea that Mark 10:38–39 and Luke 12:50 are versions of the same saying by Jesus, stating that it is more likely that they are two distinct sayings that were uttered on different occasions. On the other hand, Burrows

⁴⁸ Job 22:11; Pss. 18:4; 42:7; 69:1–2, 15; 88:6–7; Isa. 30:27–28 and 43:2. Francis Moloney likewise writes, 'Baptism meant the total submersion of a person within the terrors of water (see 2 Sam. 22:5; Pss. 42:8; 69:2–3; Isa. 43:2; 1QH 3:13–18).' Moloney, *Mark*, 205–206.

⁴⁹ See the 'Index of Quotations' in *The Greek New Testament*, Fifth Revised Edition, under the direction of Holger Strutwolf, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014), 860–861.

⁵⁰ *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵¹ Evidence that Luke echoed Isa. 21:4 LXX is too meager to be conclusive. In Acts 2:23 Luke writes that Jesus's crucifixion and death (the very *baptisma* of Luke 12:50) were at the *hands of lawless men* (διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων), reminiscent of a *lawless-acting lawless one* (ὁ ἀνομῶν ἀνομεῖ) and *lawlessness* (ἀνομία) in Isa. 21:2, 4.

⁵² Stein notes these references: Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; 49:12; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31–35; Hab. 2:16. In addition, compare Ps. Sol. 8:15; Mart. Isa. 5:13. In the NT, Mark 14:23–24, 36; John 18:11; Rev. 14:10; 16:19.

⁵³ Stein, *Mark*, 484.

⁵⁴ Stein, *Mark*, 485–486.

suggests that the brothers' readiness to answer 'yes' to Jesus's question in Mark 10:38 implies that Jesus had spoken about this before, which in turn suggests their prior awareness of Luke 12:50. Thus, in Burrows's view, Mark 10:38–39 and Luke 12:50 should not be dismissed as isolated one from the other either.⁵⁵ Burrows's suggestion seemingly entails use of the same Semitic terms in both of Jesus's sayings, that the brothers understood a Luke 12:50–Mark 10:38 connection, that both Mark and Luke knew the specific Semitic terminology, and that they both used the same Greek terms in translation. Alternatively to Burrow's view, perhaps Jesus used various Hebrew and Aramaic terms to describe his coming passion. Mark, Luke, or other sources, simply may have described the ordeal in Greek as they saw fit with contemporary detrimental senses of *baptizō*, together with the newly-coined *baptisma* in a cognate construction to stress the passion's horrific nature. Mark's and Luke's individual narrative uses of *baptizō* in the sense of Jewish purification for the two different episodes they report, Mark 7:4 and Luke 11:38, seem to support this suggestion. Wider Greek use of *baptizō* for adverse effects, together with *baptisma*, might simply have made the expression, 'a baptism with which to be baptized', a ready possibility suitable for any Semitic description of Jesus's ordeal. Because *baptizō* also bore an informal sense of drunken, it could directly reflect the Semitic imagery of drunkenness with a detrimental undertone.

R. T. France writes that it probably presses the imagery too far to suggest that Jesus mentions the cup in this passage specifically to draw out the idea of his own vicarious suffering, something that is all the more true for the brothers. The cup is simply an image for destined suffering.⁵⁶ In Mark 10:38–39 France sees little contextual correspondence between the Semitic 'drinking a cup' and the Greek sense of *baptizō* for being overwhelmed. As a result, like others such as Burrows, France turns to John's baptism for a solution. France suggests that Jesus devised a remarkable new metaphor from John's rite. While thought-provoking, this suggestion raises a question. Would James and John promptly grasp the notion that John's kingdom-related rite for all who repent actually describes literal suffering and death, things that are not at all obvious, so making John's rite comparable to the ancient figure of 'drinking a cup'? Nothing in Mark's narrative indicates lack of comprehension by the brothers, which is in contrast with Mark's earlier 'leaven of Pharisees' narrative (Mark 8:14–21). Jesus's response to the brothers' affirmative answer was simply that they indeed would drink the same cup and undergo this same baptism. Evidently Jesus knew the brothers had grasped the imagery. No elucidation of the baptism is given, whether by Jesus during the episode or by Mark as narrator (compare Mark 4:34; 9:32). Arguably, the full force of Jesus's challenge would best be felt if the brothers knew both figures of speech. That leaves France's suggestion of a new, unfamiliar

⁵⁵ Burrows, 'Baptism', 107. Similarly, in Burrows's view, the cup in Mark 10:38–39 is a restricted metaphor that refers to Jesus's expected passion, and it is used later in Jesus's Gethsemane prayer in Mark 14:36. The problem is that, again, the same cup was promised to James and John. If Jesus habitually made use of Semitic metaphors, then Mark 10:38 and Mark 14:36 may simply reflect his consistent usage, rather than being evidence that Jesus singled out this particular metaphor for exclusive reference to his ordeal.

⁵⁶ France, *Mark*, 416–417; See also, Lane, *Mark*, 379–381.

metaphor unconvincing. Jewish imagery of cup and drunkenness, however, would likely be familiar (compare Rev. 14:10; 16:19).

Part of the conundrum of Mark 10:38–39 is the presence of the verbal noun *baptisma*. Other than Luke 12:50, NT use of *baptisma* is either for John’s rite or for Christian baptismal terminology. France sees no clear precedent for *baptisma*’s sense of destined suffering in Mark 10:38 and Luke 12:50.⁵⁷ Equally, Burrows states that even if *baptizō* referred to suffering, it would still be hard to explain *baptisma* as figurative of suffering.⁵⁸ Burrows admits, ‘The sayings obviously imply that Jesus is anticipating an ordeal, but there is no evidence that “baptism” had this connotation before Jesus used it this way.’⁵⁹ Yet, since the NT itself has the earliest attestations of *baptisma*,⁶⁰ then perhaps it should not surprise that there is no precedent for a sense of suffering. Jesus’s post-resurrection community included fluent Greek-speakers (Acts 6:1), including Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 11:20–22). Perhaps they⁶¹ used Greek linguistic rules to coin the verbal noun *baptisma* to augment expressive freedom for any sense of *baptizō*, old or new.⁶² If so, then *baptisma* may not have been coined as an analog of the Hebrew *tevilah* (טבילה) for immersion.⁶³ Irrespective of the reasons for its coinage, *baptisma* appears in the NT more than a century prior to the first confirmed attestation of *tevilah*, which is in the Mishnah.⁶⁴ While *tevilah* must have been in use before the Mishnah was compiled, precisely how much earlier is open to question. Moreover, *tevilah* derives from *taval* (טבל) and this rather benign term simply does not bear the grave detrimental senses that *baptizō* bore, like drown to death or destroy by sinking, which were instead born by the Hebrew term *tava* (טבע). Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that *baptisma*, rather than being dependent on *tevilah*, instead assumed any sense of *baptizō* as a verbal noun, which would further stress the senses conveyed in cognate constructions such as in Mark 10:38–39 and Luke 12:50. Whatever *baptisma*’s origin, it likely was in use prior to Rom. 6:4, one of its earliest attestations. Paul’s use of *baptizō* and *baptisma* in Romans 6 relates to a staggering inner transformation. The underlying sense of *baptisma* in this case relates to a

⁵⁷ France, *Mark*, 416–417.

⁵⁸ Burrows, ‘Baptism’, 110.

⁵⁹ Burrows, ‘Baptism’, 110–111.

⁶⁰ The BDAG says of *baptisma* that it is ‘found only in Christian writers’.

⁶¹ G. R. Beasley-Murray notes that some exegetes suppose that *baptisma* was invented by disciples of John the Baptist, to which he responds: ‘[M]ore plausibly, it is a Christian innovation’, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. by Colin Brown, vol. 1 (Exeter, Devon, UK: Paternoster Press, 1986), 149–150.

⁶² Abbott-Smith and Oepke state that the noun *baptisma* conveys, properly, the result of the act (of *baptizō*), while the cognate noun *baptismos*, is the act itself. G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922) 75, and A. Oepke, in TDNT vol.1, 545. Beasley-Murray says there is no evidence for this, *NIDNTT*, 149–150.

⁶³ In contrast, Beasley-Murray indeed suggests *baptisma* is an analog for *tevilah*, *NIDNTT*, 149–150.

⁶⁴ Early research on the 3Q Copper Scroll [3Q15] I 11–12 suggested an occurrence of *tevilah*. Subsequent sophisticated research techniques show that *tevilah* is far from certain as the actual reading. Yonatan Adler, ‘The Archaeology of Purity: Archaeological Evidence for the Observance of Ritual Purity in *Erez-Israel* from the Hasmonean Period until the End of the Talmudic Era [164 BCE – 400 CE],’ (doctoral thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 2011), pp. 19–20, Hebrew.

dynamic event conveying astounding ontological effect, a permanent state of co-tombment with the executed Christ. So too, in Luke 12:50 the underlying sense of *baptisma* is that Jesus faces ‘a lethal ordeal to be overwhelmed with’, tacitly predicting his brutal execution. Neither of these examples of *baptisma* can be read sensibly as simple inert immersion. Both convey stunning effect; internal death in Romans 6 and physical death in Luke 12. So too with Mark 10:38–39, though the added Semitic metaphor of drunkenness for disaster seems to be included as well.

Conclusion

Several factors may have contributed to the loss of understanding of cup and drunkenness in Jesus’s saying. Non-Jewish Greek-speaking Christians probably were not familiar with Semitic language metaphors in the Hebrew Bible, and the OT source they were familiar with, the LXX, used cognates of *methyō*, such as *methysma*, for drunken, not *baptizō*. As seen in the foregoing, popular use of *baptizō* did include a sense of drunken, yet Christians likely would not envision this informal sense on Jesus’s lips if they were unfamiliar with Semitic metaphors. Then too, use of Matthew’s more polished gospel quickly overshadowed Mark’s less-polished gospel, and the earliest witnesses of Matthew’s account of this saying simply omit Jesus’s mention of *baptizō* and *baptisma* (though later witnesses add the Markan line). Moreover, by 313 CE when emperor Constantine acknowledged Christianity favorably in the Roman Empire, Christian baptism was widely understood as invested with power to wash away accumulated sins, so that many Christians, including Constantine, postponed their baptism to late in life for best effect.⁶⁵ This demonstrates that, quite early on, Christian orientation for understanding *baptizō* was heavily influenced by soteriological concerns, and this probably led to Christian senses being read into Jesus’s saying in Mark 10:38–39.

Abstract

Mark’s informal writing style and familiarity with contemporary Greek may have led him to use *baptizō* in its sense of *drunken* to render Jesus’s original Semitic saying about his passion ordeal in Mark 10:38–39. The metaphor ‘drink the cup’ occurs a number of times in the Hebrew Bible, and in Jesus’s saying it signifies facing foreordained grave harm. Scholarly opinion is uncertain, however, of what precisely Jesus intended by the ‘baptism with which he is baptized’, other than that it too relates to suffering a deadly ordeal. This article explores the likelihood that Jesus challenged James and John with drinking the cup he drinks and with being drunken with the drunkenness with which he is drunken, employing two metaphors from the Hebrew Bible, both tightly associated to each other conceptually since drinking leads to drunkenness, and both signifying a horrific ordeal.

⁶⁵ Ferguson, *Baptism*, 629.