

BAPTISM: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? (2)

By Keith Greer

"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."
(Mark 16:15)

The apostles were given a commission to preach the gospel (good news) to all men. As a part of their work, they were to be," And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20)

What did Jesus have in mind when He commanded the apostles to "**BAPTIZE**"? A close study of the scriptures will readily give us the answer to this vital question.

When Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, we read that he began to "**preach unto him Jesus.**" "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him." (Acts 8:36-39)

In Acts 10, after Peter preached to Cornelius and his household, he asked, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. " (Acts 10:47,48) In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch as well as Cornelius, we see water and baptism were required of both. **WHY?**

Previously, John had used water to baptize his disciples, and the apostles were witnesses of that fact. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance..." (Matthew 3:11) Notice even in John's baptism it was with **WATER.** "After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized." (John 3:22,23)

Why did John need much water? Whatever baptism is, it took "much water." Does it take "much water" to "sprinkle" or "pour"?

"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him." (Matthew 3:16) This passage necessarily infers that if Jesus came up out of the water, and He did, then He must have gone down into it first!

What do these examples suggest about the nature of baptism? When Jesus died for our sins, he was buried and then was resurrected on the third day. Through His resurrection, we have the hope of eternal life.

DEATH ... BURIAL ... RESURRECTION ... Do you think it's by accident that is exactly what baptism is all about – a death, burial and resurrection?

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Romans 6:3-6)

In order to be "buried with Him in baptism," one must be immersed, covered or "buried" with water. If baptism is a "sprinkling" or "pouring" is no need of "much water!" (cont.)