

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Baptism Preached by Philip

Perhaps there is no teaching of the New Testament over which more controversy has raged than the subject of baptism. This should not be the case because the teaching on baptism does not have several meanings and should not be difficult to comprehend. Throughout the book of Acts we find the exact pattern, that is unchanged, regarding how one must be saved. People heard the word, believed it, repented, confessed Christ before men, and were baptized. Notice that every conversion in the book of Acts was followed by immediate water baptism (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12-13, 38; Acts 9:18; 10:48; Acts 16:15, 33; Acts 18:8). To any reader of the Bible, it is evident that baptism was part of the gospel message of Christ (Mark 16:15-16). Wherever the apostles and inspired men went, the gospel was preached (Mark 16:20) and they told honest inquirers "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "So then, those who had received his (Peter's) word were baptized" (Acts 2:41).

Philip, one of the seven in the Jerusalem church, who was appointed as a deacon [servant] (Acts 6:3-5) and later became an evangelist (Acts 8:5), understood the pattern of God's word concerning baptism. In the account of the conversion of the eunuch from Ethiopia, Philip the evangelist, "preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:35).

"Philip RAN up" to the eunuch's chariot. Notice the urgency in preaching the gospel to one who is lost. Philip saw that the eunuch was reading from Isaiah the Prophet and asked the eunuch "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:30-31). Philip understood that one must hear the word of God. "How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:14, 17).

Philip understood that when one "preaches Jesus," it includes teaching water baptism in order to enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Philip preached the commands of the gospel on this desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. When they "came to some water" the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Philip knew that belief in Christ comes before baptism (Mark 16:16). He then said to the eunuch, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered and said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). The scripture says, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9-10).

And Philip "ordered the chariot to stop; they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38). Notice that pouring, sprinkling, or a dry baptism is not part of the commands of the gospel. No inspired preacher of the gospel at that time "preached Jesus" without preaching the water baptism that Jesus commanded; no gospel preacher today can "preach Jesus" without preaching the command to be water baptized.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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