

September 4, 2016 – 6:00 pm

Principles of Christian Growth

Section Two: The Means of Christian Growth – How do we do it?

Lesson Five: We grow through the ordinance of baptism.

Bible Reading: Matt. 28:16-20, Acts 2:37-41, 8:26-40, Rom. 6:1-7.

The Greek word *baptizō*, which means *to baptize*, is an intensified form of the word *baptō* meaning *to dip*. When our New Testament speaks of the ordinance of baptism, it speaks of a believer being immersed in water. One afternoon, a thought occurred to me that made me question this understanding. I remembered that the Greek Orthodox Church baptizes infants. So if they used sprinkling or pouring while speaking of *baptism* as Greeks, maybe it does not mean *to dip*? Then I saw a few videos of these Greek baptisms. They immerse their infants in a basin of water! Not an easy task, to be sure, but the right meaning of *baptism*.

Discussion questions:

1. Perhaps the clearest NT evidence of the mode of baptism is the example of the eunuch in Acts 8:27-39. The court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, would have had enough water in his chariot to experience sprinkling or pouring, but not a baptism. For that, he and Philip had to go down into the river they found after the eunuch trusted Christ. Where had the eunuch been (8:27), what had he seen and heard there (Acts 2:37-41), and how do you think it all affected him (8:28-39)?
2. Rom. 6:1-7 tells us the meaning of water baptism, which is a visible symbol of an invisible truth. What is the truth that baptism symbolizes?
3. Can you think of true believers today who have not been baptized since trusting Christ? Can you think of any post-Pentecost examples of this in the New Testament? Why is today different, and from Matthew 28:16-20, why should that difference concern us?