

# THE MODE OF BAPTISM

By Ron Harvey

## INTRODUCTION

As Baptists, we are very confident that the proper mode of baptism is by immersion. That is, baptism is performed by plunging the whole body in water and under water, completely covering the body with water.

That is why we purchased this new baptistery that is installed behind me. We believe that to comply with the command of Christ in baptism we must immerse believers.

It would be a lot cheaper if we just needed a bowl of water. And it would be a lot more convenient if we just dabbed a little water on people and called that baptism. But we don't believe this to be the proper way to administer this ordinance.

I. The word itself means to dip or plunge.

The word that is in our English translation is baptize. And this word is merely a reproduction of the greek word "baptizo." Essentially, the translators left the word untranslated. They just transferred the greek letters over to English. And this has caused a good bit of confusion because we don't know what that means in English.

But in the greek language, baptize meant primarily to dip or to plunge. If our translators had used the word dip as they should have, then there would have been far less confusion.

The word was used in the greek language to describe a ship that had sunk to the bottom of the ocean. It was "baptizoed."

II. It seems clear that baptism was performed by immersion by John and by the apostles.

A. John baptized in the Jordan river. (Mt.3:6)

Now the question would be, "Why did John choose to baptize in the Jordan river if he did not baptize by immersion? Had baptism been by any other way, there would be no need for a large body of water, much less a river. A bowl or basin of water would have been sufficient. But when John

baptized, he needed much water. (See John 3:23)

B. John immersed Jesus in the Jordan river. (Mt.3:16)

*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo the heavens were opened . . .*

Now when it says that Jesus went up out of the water, this presumes that he had been in the water. I can't imagine what this means if Jesus was only standing knee deep in the Jordan. The clear idea seems to be that Jesus was plunged under the water and he then went up out of the water. If Jesus had been baptized by sprinkling or pouring it would be a rather ridiculous idea that they would have walked out into the middle of the Jordan river for a few drops of water. And it is certain that Jesus went out into the Jordan. (See Mark 1:9) He did not stand at the bank, but he went in. And when he was baptized, he came up out of it.

C. The Ethiopian Eunuch was immersed. (Acts 8:36-39)

Again, they stopped by a body of water and Philip took him down into the water and he baptized him. And they then came up out of the water. The natural understanding of this would be immersion since any other form would not even require them to go into the water.

III. Among other things, baptism represents the burial of Christ.

We see that in Romans 6:4 and Col. 2:12.

No other form of administration answers to this purpose of baptism. Sprinkling water on the head does not picture the burial of Jesus. Pouring water on the body does not picture the burial of Jesus. Only plunging the body below the water pictures his burial.