

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, July 10, 2011
Baptism

The Christian life is an exciting one, unless of course, you have not been immersed (pun intended) into the fullness that the Lord intended for you. In the Book of Acts 8:26-40 the account of Philip's exciting experience with an Ethiopian eunuch is chronicled. It starts out with an angel giving Philip specific instructions to go to a certain road. There was no discussion or questions regarding what this was all about. Philip just did what he was told. Can you imagine an angel giving you instructions for a job God wanted you to do? As Philip was at the desired location the Ethiopian eunuch was on his way home from worshipping at Jerusalem, riding in his chariot and reading the Book of Isaiah. Just then the Spirit told Philip to "go to that chariot and stay near it." Let's pick it up in verse 30: *Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. ³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.* The passage he was reading was from chapter 53, that great prophetic chapter regarding the suffering servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Acts 8:34-35** ³⁴ *The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.* The next thing that happened is very interesting. We know a little bit more about what Philip told the eunuch because of the eunuch's request beginning with verse 36: *As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁷³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.*

Philip, no doubt, included the teaching about baptism in his dialogue. It is all part and parcel of the Gospel message. Jesus commanded it in the great commission in **Matthew 28:18-20** ¹⁸ *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Mark records a little more: **Mark 16:15-16** ¹⁵ *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*** Peter makes the assertion in Acts 10:46-48 when he was preaching the Gospel to the household of Cornelius and heard them speaking in tongues and praising God: ⁴⁷ *"**Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.**" ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* This shows the priority of baptism in the early church.

The word Baptism is derived from two Greek words. One means to dip as in dip into a dye and the other one means to immerse as in a sinking ship going under the water causing it to perish. When you put the two together they help paint the picture. A cloth that is put into dyed water comes out having the characteristics of the new color. It's still the piece of cloth but it's different. The two are now one. The other meaning represents how Jesus said that we must lose our life in order to gain it. The death he died, he did for us. When we receive him as Lord and Savior and identify with his death, burial, and resurrection we die to ourselves and are born again with his life in us. **Romans 6:3-4** *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death?** ⁴ We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. **Colossians 2:11-12** *In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² **having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.****

We were commanded to follow the Lord in baptism because it represents what has taken place in our lives. He wants us to be fully **immersed** into his life. Have you been baptized since becoming a Christian? If not, contact me and let's obey the Lord expecting God to work in and through us like never before. It's really not optional!