

SPIRITUAL UNITY: GOD'S PLAN—PLANK SIX, ONE BAPTISM

(Continued)

While some people preach and claim to have received various baptisms, the fact remains that Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, said there is only one (Ephesians 4:5). Further, that baptism is the one Jesus commanded his apostles to preach and practice in his Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). And notice that this commission would endure to the end of the age. So also, then, would its baptism.

Thus, Paul's declaration nearly thirty years later of there being but one baptism has to be that baptism, the one of this Great Commission. This fact also makes it easy to identify this one baptism. The matter is as simple as observing what Jesus said about it, and what those who carried out this Great Commission preached and practiced concerning its baptism, and we will have a clear picture of it. So, here we go....

1. It is addressed to everyone capable of hearing and believing the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). (Obviously, this excludes infants that are incapable of a believing response to the facts of the gospel.)

2. It is a command to be obeyed (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48), not a promise to be expected as falling upon one like a bolt from the blue.

3. It is a baptism to be administered by man (again, not as a bolt from the blue beyond human function). Jesus commanded his apostles to both teach and baptize (Matthew 28:18-19).

4. It is a baptism to be administered in the name (by the authority) of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; 19:1-5). This eliminates any notion that John the Baptist's baptism is still valid or that any baptism is to be administered in his name.

5. This baptism is in water. Concerning a Gentile, Peter asked "Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we (Jews) have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:47-48).

6. The action of this baptism is defined by Vine as "...consisting of the process of immersion, submersion and emergence..." (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). Thus, baptism was described by Paul as a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:11-12).

7. The purpose of this baptism is salvation by the remission of sins. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved..." (Mark 16:16). Sinners who believed Peter's preaching were told to repent and "...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). Simple, isn't it?

—Jerry F. Bassett