

Pickled for Christ
By Trey Sullins

How do you baptize? This question alone has caused major problems across the Lord's church for many years. Some consider it to be of great importance while others are unconcerned with its answer. Let us take a moment and discuss the mode of baptism.

Across the globe there have been numerous teachings concerning baptisms mode. From the sprinkling and pouring of water to the involuntary "Holy Spirit baptism" humans have stretched their imaginations to come up with all kinds of ways to be baptized. My grandfather told a story of a missionary, rather a false teacher, drawing a line in the sand and telling people to walk over and they were baptized. Over the many years since its institution man has tried to make baptism as convenient as possible.

Perhaps one of the greatest sources for understanding the mode of baptism outside of the Bible is in the writings of Nicander. Nicander was a Greek physician and poet who lived around 200 BC. He wrote many works including some about poisons and recipes. One of his works was a recipe on how to make a pickle. It is from this work that we can find great understanding on the mode of baptism.

When writing about making pickles, Nicander used the two words "baptizo" and "bapto." He said you must first dip (bapto) the vegetable in boiling water, then you baptize (baptizo) the pickle in the vinegar solution. The first word used is a temporary action done to prepare the vegetable. The second action is the complete immersion which causes the permanent change. Just like making a pickle today you cannot sprinkle the vegetable with solution or pour it over the top, you must immerse it.

By looking at how those around the New Testament times used the word "baptizo" we can understand how we are supposed to baptize. In Mark 16:16 Jesus uses the exact same word "baptizo" when He says, "He who believes and is **baptized** will be saved." Just like the pickle, he who is baptized is immersed. In Acts 2:38, while talking to those who had joined in the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:23), Peter says "repent and let every one of you be baptized." This word used for baptism is again the same word "baptizo." Finally, in Galatians 3:27 a conjugated form of the same word "baptizo" is used. Paul writes "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

If more evidence was needed, we can as well look into the scriptures for the evidence on the mode of baptism. Romans 6:3-4 shows us the symbolic nature of baptism. In verse three Paul uses a conjugated form of the word "baptizo." In verse four he explains how we are buried with Christ through baptism (baptizo). What more closely resembles burial: being sprinkled with water or being immersed in water? Immersion is the obvious choice! Looking even deeper into Acts 8:38, the Bible says Philip and the eunuch went into the water and then the eunuch was baptized (baptizo). Now read the account with the more literal word "And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he [immersed] him."

As we live the life of Christians, it's important to be able to discern between what God wants and

what man teaches. We also must be able to stand against these false teachings and teach those who believe them by having the knowledge of the scriptures. Next time someone asks you “How do you baptize?” maybe you should say “You have to be immersed like a pickle!”