

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 6:1-4 (B)

Student Notes:

Summarizing, "Dead in Christ".

The natural meaning: Christ took in himself the penalty of all sin: Sin and death no longer have a claim on him. We have been joined to Christ by his death and resurrection. In that sense, we too, have "died to sin". In other words, sin and death have no further legal claim on us -- because Christ has paid the penalty for us.

- **How We May Be Said To Have To "Died To Sin" Through Baptism.**

Verses 3-4: "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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."

Paul's question is actually one of mild frustration -- "Or don't you know?" -- Paul commonly uses that phrase when he's about to tell his audience something they are supposed to already know.

Paul is confronting the false idea or teaching Christians are free to sin so that they may receive more grace. This false view betrays their ignorance of what it meant for them to be baptized.

Three clarifications about Paul's use of "baptism" in this passage.

1. Baptism In Romans 6:3-4 Means Water Baptism

As a rule of interpretation, In the New Testament, "baptism" means water baptism unless the context insists on something else. That's important, because different types of baptism appear in the New Testament, and don't all have the same purpose.

A Chart Of Baptisms:

Scripture	Baptizer	Agent	Purpose
Matthew 3:1-11	John	Water	Repentance
Matthew 3:11b-12a <hr/>	Jesus	Holy Spirit	Salvation
1 Corinthians 12:13			Placement into Christ's Body
Matthew 3:12b	Jesus	Holy Spirit and "Fire"	Endowment of Spirit's Gifts
Matthew 28:19	Christian Leader	Water	Public Identification with Christ

Paul's use of "baptism" in Romans 6:3-4 refers to "water baptism" – because it is the only baptism that symbolizes death and resurrection to new life.

Other theologians make Paul's reference to baptism point to the baptism with the Spirit as uniting us with Christ: See: 1 Corinthians 12:13.

Why is there any argument about this among theologians? I think it is a protection by some against the theology of what we call "baptismal regeneration" -- the teaching that water baptism itself is the means of redemption or salvation.

Would Paul, with his dramatic "Damascus Road" conversion, suggest that simply baptizing someone would save them? (Hardly!)

2. Baptism Indicates Our Union To Christ:

Water baptism can symbolize a number of things, including, cleansing from sin, death to the old way of life, and commitment to follow Christ.

However, the most essential part of a believer's baptism is the indication that we have been united to Christ in two critical matters: His death and His resurrection.

Paul uses the preposition, "into" Christ. He writes, "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

Matthew 28: ("The Great Commission") "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

The formula: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" -- There is no separation in the godhead – or in our discipleship to them.

The believer's baptism became more and more identified with union with Christ: It is Christ who was buried and rose again; we are being identified specifically with Him in water baptism.

Water baptism eventually became described as, "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ", in Acts 2:38, 10:48; or "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus", in Acts 8:16, 19:5.

Another dominant feature of baptism: It points to entering into relationship with him.

- **The Israelites Baptism: I Corinthians 10:1-4:**

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

The Israelites were identified with Moses as their leader – as they were "baptized into ... the cloud and in the sea". When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized as an identification with Him – and as a symbol of union and allegiance to him. We say, "I am Jesus' disciple".

3. Baptism Does Not Secure Eternal Life By Itself:

The New Testament often uses what we call "dynamic language" when it describes various Christian rites and traditions. For example, with regard to baptism, it describes the effects of baptism as "washing our sins, our clothing, and ourselves with Christ.

Example: 1 Peter 3:21:

“And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”

Peter is pointing to the whole conversion experience. Repentance plus baptism is the whole package. It is the full picture of our union with Christ.

Paul's point is that our union to and with Christ is visually portrayed by baptism.

Conclusion: Paul's statement in Romans 6:4 – “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.”

The language of death and resurrection: We were “buried with him by baptism into death.”

Burial is the ultimate separation from the living. We bury people because they don't belong among us anymore! It indicates a real separation from the living.

Baptism indicates a real separation from our old lives. Paul says the purpose is to emulate Christ's own experience. We were baptized, that, “... Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

As John MacArthur puts it: “The first thing that happens when you're saved is you attend your own funeral. That's where it all begins. You die to sin.”

***Next time**, we look at Paul's third argument against Antinomianism.