

BAPTISM – PART FOUR

In one sense, baptism is purely an act of obedience commanded by God and obeyed by man. There is no miraculous power in the water. The water is neither holy nor specially blessed. It is not ours to wonder why God choose baptism as an element of the Salvation. It is sufficient to know that He did. Man's wisdom is greatly limited when it comes to things of a spiritual nature (1 Corinthians 2:19). However, God, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and through the Scriptures, does enlighten us somewhat. What follows is a Bible based explanation of baptism.

Romans 6 is the key chapter on understanding baptism. Paul began in Romans 5:12 by explaining that death entered the world through the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. He goes on to explain that life re-entered through Christ Jesus (Romans 5:18,19). Paul writes *"by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous"* (Romans 5:19). In Philippians 2:8 Paul tells us what the obedience includes: *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* So death is the obedience Paul refers to in Romans 5. This becomes even clearer when we examine the context as revealed in Romans 6. Paul is clearly speaking of death. But also notice the role that baptism plays in chapter 6.

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:2-4)

So we see that Christ became obedient to death and that we also become obedient in a similar fashion, namely, the death to sin (Romans 6:2). However, Paul continues the analogy to Christ's death, burial and resurrection as seen above. We continue to be like Christ by dying to sin (vs 2) and then by being buried with Him, not buried in dirt or in a tomb but *"by baptism"* (vs 4). Paul presses the analogy further when he declares that our change of life or *"newness of life"*, as he says, is like the resurrection of Jesus. Paul isn't finished yet. Read carefully the next verse: *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection"* (vs 5). Note also what he says just a few verses later and in the same context: *"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him"* (Romans 6:8).

Let's recap. Christ died, was buried and rose again. In order to be united in that same experience, we must die (repent), be buried (baptism) and rise anew. The benefit of such is that if we do these things then *"we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection"* (Romans 6:5) and *"we shall also live with Him"* (Romans 6:8). Is baptism essential for salvation? Read the Bible and you decide. Commanded in Acts 2:38 *et al*, demonstrated in Acts 8:26 *et al*, and explained in Romans 6. Could the answer be any clearer?

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