

**THE BAPTISM
THAT
SAVES US**

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Written and Distributed by
Peter Townsend

lovethetruth.comfypage.com

The Baptism That Saves Us

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. *Col 2:11,12*

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, *Col 3:1-10*

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. *Rom 6:1-7*.

All those who are in Christ have been identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. This is the baptism that saves us. In the context of the above passages this truth is linked with forsaking sin and living righteously. It is no obscure or unimportant doctrine. Rather it is a truth which has a very vital, practical, sanctifying application.

The N.T. teaches a way of progressively deadening the sinful nature which stresses being dead to sin and risen with Christ. This way is very different from what we might expect.

“...reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Rom 6:11*”

Many people get the wrong idea of what it means to be “dead to sin” in this sense. Some think that it means to consider ourselves in some way insensitive and unresponsive to sin so that we just don’t feel its lusts and passions anymore. Others think that the sinful nature has been eradicated. But such ideas involve “putting our head in the sand” like the ostrich when it sees its enemies coming and pretends they do not exist. Our own experience and the Bible make it clear that in this life we will have a continuing struggle with the sinful nature. *Gal 5:17 1 John 1:8*. This has to do with our present condition or state.

Being dead to sin and risen with Christ has to do with our “standing” in God’s sight, that is the way God sees us, as distinct from our “state.” Like justification, it is one of the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God *Col 3:11*.

We become dead to sin and risen with Christ by being “baptized into Jesus Christ” *Rom 6:3,4*. This is a spiritual baptism as distinct from water baptism which symbolizes it.

The Baptism Through Faith

Just prior to His crucifixion Jesus described His impending death, burial and resurrection as a baptism, and further He told His disciples that they too would have a part with Him in this baptism.

But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished *Luke 12:50*

“...So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be

baptized;" *Mark 10:39*

Later on how their hearts would "burn within them" when they realized the tremendous significance of His words.

That which was true for the disciples is also true for all those who are in Him. When we believe in Him we are baptized into Jesus Christ, thus becoming identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. This baptism is brought about by the Holy Spirit *1 Cor 12:13*

It is received by faith at the time of conversion

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead." *Col 2:12*.

Peter's Illustration

In the story of the flood and the ark we have a type or figure of the spiritual baptism which saves us.

The like figure of which even baptism also now saves us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 3:21*.

(Note - the NIV is not helpful in understanding this passage)

The flood represents the judgment of God against sin. The waters of the flood did not cleanse and they certainly did not save anyone. Hence this passage cannot be used to support any doctrine of salvation by water baptism.

The eight people in the ark represent those who are saved by being in Christ. The ark represents Christ (c.f. Psalm 42:7).

Just as Noah and his family went through the judgment of God upon the earth at that time by being in the ark, so those who believe in Jesus are accounted to have died that death which is the penalty of sin by being in Christ and to have been raised with Him.

The power of His resurrection

In order that Jesus might become our substitute, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us..." *2 Cor 5:21*

"The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all." *Isaiah 53:6*

i.e. God imputed our sin to Him. It became judicially His sin with all its horror guilt and. the penalty of death).

*"Oh make me understand it
help me to take it in
what it meant to Thee the holy One
to bear away my sin"*

(Katherine A.M.Kelly)

His was a death of deaths of infinite redeeming value and efficacy. By His almighty power He fully accomplished that death, so that it had no more claims upon Him and therefore God raised him up,

“..... having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” *Acts 2:24*

In raising Him from the dead God demonstrated that He had fully paid the penalty of sin.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God.
Rom 6:8-10

Risen with Christ

The tremendous significance for us is that the penalty of sin was also fully paid, once and for all for those who are identified with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Rom 6:11*

Death, the penalty of sin, has no more claims upon them than it has over their risen, ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

His resurrection proclaims their justification *Rom 4:25*.

They “believe in God who raised Him from the dead...” and have

“...the answer of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” *1 Peter 3:21*. (KJV)

As a result of the spiritual baptism believers are :

- Baptized into His death *Rom 6:3*

- Buried with Him and raised with Him [Col 2:12](#)
- Dead to sin and alive to God [Rom 6:11](#)
- Dead to the law [Rom 7:4](#) [Gal 2:19](#)
- Crucified with Christ [Gal 2:20](#)
- Dead to what we were held by [Rom 7:6](#)
- freed from sin. [Rom 6:7](#) [John 8:36](#)

The Two Ways of Dying

Because God is holy and just, He requires that the full penalty must be paid, for all sin, and that penalty is death. There are however two ways of dying this death ; dying in the wrath to come or dying with Jesus.

- Those who reject Christ will die that everlasting death which is the penalty of sin, and called the second death in [Rev 20:14,15](#).
- Those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have been united with Him in His death burial and resurrection. God imputes to them that they have already died that death which is the penalty of all their sins, past present and future, and they are now risen with Him. God will never require any further penalty for their sin and they have a sure and certain hope of eternal life
 “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1
Peter 1:3.

*“With Christ we died to sin
 lay buried in His tomb
 but quickened now with Him our life
 we stand beyond our doom.”*

(Mckay)

Application

Sin reigns over us through guilt and the fear of that death which is the penalty of sin

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death

He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. *Heb 2:14,15*

“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.”
1 Cor 15:56.

That enslaving fear is removed when we understand what it means to be dead to sin and risen with Christ. We then see how completely and eternally the guilt has been removed and the penalty paid for every sin past, present and future for those who are in Christ. As we count on this, the power of sin over us is broken. *Rom 6:7 Rom 6:7,7 John 8:36.*

“He breaks the power of cancelled sin.”

He sets the prisoner free.”

(Charles Wesley)

God’s ways are very different from our ways. His way of delivering His people from the power of sin is very different from what we might expect and what is taught by some “evangelical traditions.” It is His purpose for us that we experience liberation from our natural bondage to sin, through holding onto this truth of our complete deadness to sin in Christ.

There is a very great difference being completely dead to sin and progressively deadening the sinful nature. This is brought out in Col 3:1-5 by comparing verse 3 with verse 5.

Verse 3 “For you are dead...”

This is something complete, final, never to be improved upon, repeated or altered, nor can we lose it. It is “dead indeed to sin” in such a way that the penalty of all our sin has been paid.

Verse 5 “Put to death therefore.. “

This is something quite different from the death of verse 3. It is a progressive deadening of the sinful nature and something which will not be fully complete in this life. *Phil 3:12.* Verses 3,4 describe the accomplished fact.

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

The word “therefore” in verse 5 points back to verses 1-4 as the liberating truth and motive for carrying out the progressive deadening mentioned in verses 5-10.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, When we understand this doctrine we are to be always counting on it.

**Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin,
but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
Rom 6:11

When we fall

Those who have been born again have a new nature which enables them to please God. [2 Cor 5:17](#) They delight in the law of God. [Rom 7:22-25](#).

However the old nature is still within. [Rom 7:22-25](#). While God has made full provision for our victory over it, there will always be a continuing struggle with it.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. [Gal 5:16,17](#).

God in His grace has made provision for us when we stumble and fall into sin. If we truly belong to Him we will be utterly miserable and wretched because of sin and subject to attacks from the old accuser. God does not want us to stay long wallowing in despair and defeat because of our failures, but rather that we may promptly confess our sin and be restored to fellowship and communion with Him.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:8,9](#)

On the Walk of Faith. (by an old writer named Romaine)

‘True spiritual mortification does not consist in sin not being in you, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being kept upon it. There must be something more to establish perfect peace in your conscience; and that is the testimony of God concerning the body of sin. He has provided for your perfect deliverance from it in Christ.

Everything needful for this purpose was finished by Him upon the cross. He was your Surety. He suffered for you. Your sins were crucified with Him, and nailed to His cross. They were put to death when He died: for He was your covenant-head, and you were legally represented by Him, and are indeed dead to sin by His dying to sin once. The law has now no more right to condemn you, a believer, than it has to condemn Him. Justice is bound to deal with you, as it has with your risen and ascended Savior.

If you do not thus see your complete mortification (*deadness*) in Him, sin will reign in you. No sin can be crucified either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience; because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified (*deadened*) in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not see his perfect deadness to sin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief; and if he be not persuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of self-righteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all, self must still be looked upon as something great, and there will be food left for the pride of self-importance and self-sufficiency; so that he cannot grow into the death of Christ in sensible experience, further than he believes himself to be dead to sin in Christ. The more clearly and steadfastly he believes this, as the Apostle did — *I am crucified with Christ* — in proportion will he cleave to Christ, and receive from Him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification (*deadness*) in Christ, is the true Gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons. Read the sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to you.

There you wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing

that you are planted together with Christ in His death; from thence only your pardon flows, from thence your daily victory is received, and from thence your eternal victory will be perfected.

BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

In the N.T. there is no thought of a believer remaining unbaptized. Acts 2:41.

It is God's appointed way of confessing Christ by an action. Matt 10:32,33

It follows upon profession of faith in Christ. Mark 16:16.

No one should wait to be baptized until he or she fully understands its significance. Acts(8:35-38; 9:18; 10:47,48; 16:15; 16:33)

Christians should always obey the truth already known. Further light and knowledge will come later.

The only essential condition for baptism is that of true saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 8:37 KJV).

In early Christian times, it often involved persecution and death. The same is true in many cultures today. It is a step which should not be undertaken lightly and not until sure of genuine commitment to Christ.

It is the first action of a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. ²²Mark 16:15,16

It signifies and proclaims:

- Union with Christ in His death burial and resurrection Col 2:12.
- Faith in Christ and commitment to Him.
- Identification with the Christian community
- Commitment to forsake the former sinful life and to live the new life in Christ Rom 6:4.

It does not save us but it symbolizes the spiritual baptism which does save us. 1 Peter 3:21 (See KJV) Rom 6:1-11 Col 2:12.

In Acts 2:38 where baptism is said to be for the remission of sins and in Acts 22:16 where Paul was told to "...be baptized and wash away your sins," baptism should be seen as an expression of faith in Christ, since the Scripture makes it clear that we have remission of sins and cleansing from sin only through the blood of Christ. Heb 9:12; Heb 9:22; 1 John 1:7; Rev 1:5; Rev 7:14; Rom 3:25 Acts 15:9.

It does not give us new birth 1 Peter 1:23 James 1:18 John 3:8 John 1:13.

Baptism by immersion in water is the only mode of baptism which represents death, burial and resurrection.

Baptism should be **"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."** Matt 28:19 Acts 19:1-5.

As long as this is done, any Christian may baptize another.

References

1. Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would.
2. 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
3. Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
4. 1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
5. 2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
6. Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.
7. Rom 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
8. Col 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
9. Rom 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
10. Rom 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.
11. Gal 2:19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.
12. Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
13. Rom 7:6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.
14. Rom 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. {freed: Gr. Justified}
Rom 6:6,7 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.
15. John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.
16. Rev 20:14,15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.
17. Phil 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.
18. 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

19. Rom 7:22-25 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.
20. Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to the
21. Matt 10:32,33 Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.
22. Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
23. Acts (8:35-38; 9:18; 10:47,48; 16:15; 16:33)
24. Acts 8:35-38 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him
25. Acts 9:18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized
26. Acts 10:47 Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?
27. Acts 16:15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.
28. Acts 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.
29. Rom 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
30. Heb 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
31. Heb 9:22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.
32. 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
33. Rev 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood

34. Rev 7:14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
35. Rom 3:25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed
36. Acts 15:9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.
37. 1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,
38. James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
39. John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit
40. John 1:13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.