

Baptized Into His Death

(Rom 6:3)

- Remember Paul's context is the assurance of justification by faith due to our being put into union with Christ

- I. Exposition of v.2 begins here (continues thru v.11)
 - A) "We died to sin" is the primary answer Paul has given to the question of v.1
 - 1. This is the outcome of what he has explained in 5:10-21 and involves union with Christ compared to our previous union with Adam
 - i. Rom 5:10- "In His life" is the key phrase Paul is working out
 - B) The simplicity of this foundational truth is proven by Paul's "don't you know?"
 - 1. Paul had never been to Rome, and yet assumes every Roman Christian understands this fact
 - 2. "So many of us" = "all of us/every one of us"
 - i. This truth applies to every person who has been saved
 - ii. We are all either "in Adam" or "in Christ"
 - iii. Rom 8:9- If we have not the Spirit, we are none of His
 - a) Paul appeals to this basic knowledge of union with Christ as the basis for what he is going to say about not living in sin (or continuing as we were)
 - 1) Like someone would say to a cheating newlywed, "don't you know you are married now, how can you continue as you were?"

- II. The problem of "baptism" here
 - A) "Baptize" is a transliteration and was never translated from the Latin Vulgate onwards
 - B) 2 Greek words used:
 - 1. *Bapto*- "to dip or immerse"
 - 2. *Baptizo*- Can mean to immerse, but has multiple other meanings as well
 - i. Greeks use *baptizo* to represent a change taking place
 - a) Josephus uses it to refer to the crowds flooding into Jerusalem and wrecking the city
 - b) Classical writers used it to refer to dying cloth, drinking until drunk
 - c) Nicander's pickle recipe uses both words:
 - 1) "*Bapto* in boiling water 1st (temporary) and then *baptizo* into final vinegar solution (effecting the desired permanent change)"
 - ii. 1 Cor 10:1-2- Paul uses it here, but the only ones "dipped" were the Egyptians

- a) But a permanent change did occur at the Red Sea, where the Israelites were forever removed from Egyptian bondage and placed under God's care through Moses
- iii. Gal 3:27- "Baptized" with water in no way matches "put on" with new clothes, but a change does (like soldier donning uniform)

III. Rom 6:3- Baptized into Christ/ His death

A) Various interpretations brought on by the word "baptism" here:

1. Baptismal regeneration- it is baptism itself which effects/produces the change of regeneration
 - i. But clearly in the N/T it is those who have already been regenerated that are water baptized- Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, Philippian jailer, etc.
 - ii. Baptism never confers anything, it seals something to the believer
2. Profession of faith- It's a public profession that we believe in Him, or that we trust His death, burial and resurrection
 - i. This can be true, but is this Paul's context?
 - a) How can our assurance of salvation be based on what "we do?"
 - b) "Were baptized"- aorist indicative PASSIVE
 - 1) This indicates something done to us, not by us
3. Church membership- Makes us a member of the church; without which you cannot be part of the church the body of Christ
 - i. Eph 2:19-22- How then can we be in same church with O/T saints?
4. Pictorial representation- shows what happens in our union with His death, burial and resurrection
 - i. But in v.4, Paul doesn't say it's a picture, by that "through baptism" something actually takes place
 - a) The baptismal regeneration advocates at least recognize that Paul is saying that this baptism accomplishes the thing that is important above all
 - ii. Certainly it is the sacrificial death of Christ for the guilt of our sins by means of crucifixion that is the central picture that would need to be conveyed in any pictorial representation, but that's missing here completely
 - a) Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ..."
 - b) "Death" leaves out the vicarious suffering as well as propitiation
 - c) In this so-called picture, the death could be by natural causes
5. Vow or oath- in baptism we take a pledge to walk in newness of life
 - i. How is this assuring? Is this how we pass from Adam to Christ?
 - a) 1 Cor 10:1-12- How many of those "taking a vow to Moses" reached their final destination?
 - ii. Besides, Paul's context is union with Christ, not coming under the "influence" of Christ

- B) What is the proper interpretation then in the context?
1. Does Paul even refer to water baptism here at all?
 - i. Rom 6:5- “Planted together” has been used to pictured burial in the watery grave
 - a) *Symphytos*- “grafted, to become one and the same plant by union”
 - 1) “We shall be also”- How could this also refer to “watery burial” in resurrection in the same verse?
 - b) John 15:1-6- Vine and branches
 - c) 1 Cor 12- Head and body
 - d) Eph 5- Husband and wife
 2. Virtually all commentators agree that Paul’s context from Rom 5:10 on is “union with Christ,” but the word “baptism” takes the mind of that at once
 - i. Paul is clearly teaching that it is “union with Christ” and no longer Adam that confers all these blessings upon us, and he also clearly states that it is “by baptism” that this union takes place
 - ii. What sort of “baptism” does Paul refer to?
 - a) 1 Cor 12:13- “By/in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body”
 - 1) This is baptismal regeneration, just not water baptism
 - (a) Tit 3:3-6- Washing and regeneration of the Holy Spirit
 - (b) Eph 2:1-7- Quickening of the Spirit
 - 2) Rom 6:4- All is done by “the glory (“majestic power”) of the Father
 - 3) Acts 2:38- Repent (active voice) and be baptized (passive voice)
 - 4) Mark 16:16- Everyone who believes (active voice) and is baptized (passive voice)
 - (a) What about the thief on the cross, or Abraham, David, etc.

IV. Paul’s emphasis here is on burial (Rom 6:3-4)

- A) Buried- refers to the actual putting away of the dead body into the earth
 1. Until the burial, the corpse is still in this world
- B) “Buried by baptism into death” is a strange phrase, almost backwards
 1. A body doesn’t become dead because it is buried, it is buried because it is already dead
 2. Water baptism can’t kill anything, only drowning can
 3. But the body in this case is certainly already dead
 - i. Born dead in Adam (John 3:18, Eph 2:1-3)
 - ii. This has been Paul’s point for over 2 chapters in Romans
- C) Paul is expounding upon the fact that the believer has “died to the reign of sin”
 1. “You have not only died to it, but been buried to it, never again to return,”
 2. To go on in sin is equivalent to “digging up the dead”