

What Does Baptism Teach Us?

Scripture Reading: Romans 5:19 – 6:6

Among the many great themes in the Book of Romans, we see:

- Sin and the Need for Salvation.
- Our Savior and His Work of Salvation.
 - His Deliverance from the Penalty of Sin – An Immediate Gift When We believe.
 - His Deliverance from the Power of Sin – A Progressive Gift That Requires Our Cooperation.
 - His Deliverance from the Presence of Sin – A Future Hope.

In our Scripture reading (Romans 5:19 – 6:6), Paul is showing us:

- Sin came into the world by one man – Adam.
- Salvation has come to us by one man – Jesus Christ. (**Romans 5:19** cp. Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 15:21-22,45-49)
- The effect of Sin brought spiritual death upon all men. Sin is the ruling force in those who are left in their natural condition.
- The effect of Christ's salvation brings grace to all men who believe. Grace is the ruling force, causing believers to overcome the power of sin. (**Romans 5:20-21** cp. Romans 3:30-34; 8:1-13; John 3:16; 5:24; 8:12; Acts 10:43; Ephesians 2:8-10)
- Salvation by Grace does not give us a license to keep on sinning. (**Romans 6:1-2** cp. Titus 2:11-14; 3:8; I John 1:5 – 2:6; Jude 1:1-25)
- **Baptism reminds us that those who have received Christ are dead to the old, self-centered, sinful agenda of the past and are now made alive, with freedom from sin's deceptive, controlling power.** Christ indwells us and frees us from slavery to sin. (**Romans 6:3-6** cp. Colossians 2:6-12; John 8:30-36; Romans 6:1-23; 8:1-13)

Two Examples of Baptism from the Book of Acts:

Acts 2:36-42

- Baptism is for those who repent (i.e. *"change their mind"* – **Acts 2:38** cp. Acts 3:19-26; Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-5).
- Baptism is for those who believe on Christ for the remission of their sins (*"Remission" = "to send away"* – **Acts 2:38** cp. Luke 24:44-48; Acts 10:43 – note that baptism is not mentioned in these last two references).
- Baptism shows the beginning of a new life – a life of following Christ, fellowshiping with Christ's people, and serving Christ together with them (**Acts 2:41-42** cp. Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 2:6-12).

Acts 16:25-34

- Paul was able to preach the gospel to the Philippian jailer and his family.
- When the jailer and his family believed the gospel, they were baptized (Note: There are no examples of babies being baptized in the New Testament).

Conclusion

Baptism shows outwardly a spiritual work that has happened inwardly by the Spirit of Christ (Colossians 2:12; Ephesians 1:12-14; I Peter 1:18-23; John 6:63). When a man and a woman fall in love and pledge themselves to be forever man and wife, rings are often used to symbolize that union. Just putting on a ring does not make us married. A relationship of love and commitment does. It is possible to be married without having rings. Nevertheless, baptism is commanded and is expected of the believer (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 – note that Christ does **not** say *"whoever believes but is not baptized will be damned / condemned"*). Baptism is not a requirement for salvation. It is an act of obedience by those who are saved by God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a testimony, identifying ourselves with Christ publicly.

Two thousand years of controversy has created a lot of confusion and division about certain Scriptures and the subject of baptism. It is hoped that this simple explanation, taken from the writings and the examples of the apostles will help you to be untangled from denominational complications. Some elevate this subject above its intended purpose. Others have rendered it obsolete. Still, others recoil from it – avoid it because of the controversial environment that surrounds it. Let us prayerfully go to the source, the New Testament, and faithfully follow the Lord in baptism.