

The meaning of Baptism. Romans 6: 1-14

3-4 *all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised 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.*

God raised Jesus from the dead.

- In the same way he raises us from the death of sin.
- The way he shows that is in baptism.

There is **symbolism** here. There is **truth** here.

For the NT writers, baptism was for people (normally adults) who could make a conscious decision.

- It was for believers who could put their faith in Christ.

1. The **meaning**

A confirmation of Divine grace.

Behind the symbolic death and resurrection in baptism, is the death and resurrection of Jesus, giving the symbol meaning, as a sign confirming the grace of God on the Cross.

- Apart from His Cross, our baptism has no meaning. Indeed, Jesus referred to the Cross as his baptism in Mark 10:39.

A symbol of union with Christ.

That is our share in his death and resurrection. v10. Death to the old life, to sin, self, and the declaration that we are now raised to a new life with Christ.

Confession of faith.

It is a way of demonstrating, ie being witness, to a faith which is open, decisive and from which there can be no turning back. It is a way of demonstrating a real, and resolute faith.

An expression and a pledge of obedience.

It is a sacrament which pledges the believer to a life of wholehearted **obedience**, which is a mark of real faith.

Obedience to the command to be baptised is a deliberate and dramatic declaration of the believer's intention and pledge.

A sign of fellowship.

In NT it was a gateway to the active fellowship of the Church. The sharing of the fellowship of those who are one with Christ, the body of Christ, the Church. It is the common door through which

believers from every walk of life are called to pass as obedient to Christ, and as brothers one to another.

Sign of the Holy Spirit's presence.

In Acts the preaching of repentance, baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit are closely linked. (see Acts 2:38).

- Sure, we receive the Holy Spirit when we accept Christ as Saviour.
- We make no apology for insisting that the obedience of baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit are linked.
- So, the believer who really desires to be obedient to the Holy Spirit will be **compelled** to face the challenge of believer's baptism, because of this NT insistence.

3. The challenge.

The **meaning** is emphasised by the **symbolism**.

- Baptism is a re-enactment of Easter. Entering the water is like going into a grave. Symbolic of dying and rising. (8,9). ⁸*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*
- Therefore, (11,12) how can we live in sin again? Dead to sin and alive to Christ! ¹¹*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.*

Never play with the mercy of God. The person baptised has entered a new kind of life. But it is more than a **change**, it is a **union**. It is as essential as the air we breathe or the food we eat.

(14) *sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*