

Understanding Baptism

Romans chapter 6 gives the most detailed explanation of baptism in all of Scripture. Baptism is figurative of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, “baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?** Therefore 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.**” (vs. 3-4). It’s the turning point of our lives from living sinfully to righteously as servants of the Lord.

We’re to reckon sin as forever in our past, “Likewise **reckon ye** also yourselves to be **dead indeed unto sin**” (v. 11). And to consider ourselves as a new person—that our former sinful person went under the water, and our current righteous person came up: “Knowing this, that our **old man [person]** is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that **henceforth we should not serve sin**” (v. 6); “That ye put off concerning **the former conversation [lifestyle] the old man [person]** ... And that ye put on **the new man [person]**” (Eph 4:22,24); “Buried with him in baptism” (Col 2:12), “that ye have put off **the old man [person] with his deeds;** And have put on **the new man [person]**” (Col 3:9-10). Baptism is the new birth from being a child of the devil to a child of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ stated, “Whosoever **committeth sin is the servant of sin**” (Jhn 8:34), and Paul taught this about baptism, “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey;** whether of **sin unto death,** or of **obedience unto righteousness**” (v. 16). We’re servants of whom we obey. If we commit sin, we’re not servants of Christ but servants of sin. John said, “Whosoever abideth in him **sinneth not** ... He that **committeth sin is of the devil** ... Whosoever is **born of God doth not commit sin;** for his seed remaineth in him: and he **cannot sin,** because he is born of God” (1Jo 3:6,8,9). Those serving sin, however, redefine “sinneth not,” “doth not commit sin,” and “cannot sin” as “doesn’t habitually sin” or “doesn’t practice sin.” But those living righteously, that we don’t commit sin.

God’s children can’t sin and remain servants of Christ, “Whosoever is **born of God** doth not commit sin; for **his seed remaineth in him:** and **he cannot sin,** because he is **born of God**” (1Jo 3:9). God’s seed is what He has planted, “Every plant, which **my heavenly Father hath not planted,** shall be rooted up” (Mat 15:13), which is through baptism, “For if we have been **planted together in the likeness of his**

death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his resurrection*” (v. 5). In baptism, we’re committing ourselves to die in the likeness of Christ’s death, to have eternal life in the likeness of His resurrection. As seeds produce after their own kind, we must be “planted” in the ground after His death, to be raised from the ground after His life.

This is what Paul taught about the resurrection, “*Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die ... All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds*” (1Co 15:36,39). As seeds and flesh always produce after their own kind, so it is with the resurrection. Christ taught, “Except a man be **born of water and of the Spirit [breath],** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is **born of the flesh is flesh;** and that which is **born of the Spirit [breath] is spirit [breath].**” (Jhn 3:5-6). What’s born of the flesh is flesh, after the same kind—humans of humans, beasts of beasts, fishes of fishes, and birds of birds. And what’s born of God’s breath must be after the same “kind” as Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

The flood was figurative of baptism, “in the days of **Noah,** while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were **saved by water. The like figure** whereunto *even baptism doth also now save 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” (1Pe 3:20-21). Before the water of baptism, the thoughts of our hearts in God’s sight were only evil continually, “And **GOD saw** that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of **the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**” (Gen 6:5). But now we live with good conscience toward God after Christ’s example, “if a man **for conscience toward God** endure grief, suffering wrongfully ... **Christ also** suffered for us, leaving us **an example,** that ye should **follow his steps: Who did no sin** ... Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being **dead to sins,** should **live unto righteousness**” (1Pe 2:19,21,24). As He “did no sin” we must also do no sin, but live righteously.

Being immersed in water doesn’t free us from sin, having God’s breath in our hearts does, “through the Spirit [breath] do mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13). It’s only when we begin obeying Christ’s doctrine from our hearts that God gives us His breath to free us from sin and live righteously, “ye have **obeyed from the heart** that form of **doctrine** which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin,** ye became **the servants of righteousness.**” (vs. 17,18).