

THE BELIEVER IS NOT TO CONTINUE IN SIN (PART 1): HE IS TO KNOW HIS POSITION IN CHRIST ROMANS 06: 01–10

Introduction: Holiness

The believer who is justified (whose faith is counted as righteousness, Rom. 3:21- 5:21) is to let his righteousness work holiness (Rom. 6:19). The believer is to live a holy life and become a servant of righteousness. A genuinely saved person cannot abuse the mercy of God. He cannot walk in sin; he cannot make a habit of sinning. To do so is to tread upon the mercy of God and make a mockery of God's grace. It is to say that God's grace gives a person the license to sin, and such is a contradiction of terms — as much a contradiction as to say that a dead man is alive. (See Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:13.)

The way for a man to break the habit of sin is for him to know the glorious position he can have in Christ. One thing is certain: every believer should definitely know the position he holds in Christ. It will revolutionize his life.

Now for the point of the passage. The believer is to know his real position in Christ. Knowledge of his position will help keep him from sin. Note the word “*know*” is used three times (Rom. 6:3, 6, 9).

- I. The believer and the question of license (vv. 1-2).
- II. Know first: by position, the believer is baptized, placed into Christ (vv. 3-5).
- III. Know second: by position, the believer's old self was crucified with Christ (vv. 6-7).
- IV. Know third: by position, the believer lives with Christ — now and forever (vv. 8-10).

I. Romans 06:01–02 License and Grace vs. Law and Sin

The believer and the question of license. Note three points.

1. Does the grace of God give a person a free reign to sin? Can a person just go ahead and do what he wants expecting God to forgive him? Grace means God's undeserved and unmerited favour. It means that God freely accepts and forgives a person's sins; that He freely justifies a person by faith. (See *Justification and Faith*, Rom. 4:22; Rom. 5:1.) Two things bother a lot of people about the teaching of salvation by grace and grace alone.
 - a. Grace seems to give free reign to sin, to put no restraint upon sin. These are often the thoughts of the common man, even believers. There is the feeling that if we are forgiven by grace and not by law and doing good, then sin does not matter that much. We do not have to worry too much about the law of God and righteousness, just so we do a fair amount of good. We can pretty much do what we want, for God is going to
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forgive us anyway. God is gracious and loving and good; therefore, He is going to forgive our sins no matter what we do. Christ died for our sins. All we have to do is ask Him and He will forgive us.

- b. Grace seems to encourage sin. Paul had just said that grace is stronger than sin (Rom. 5:15-21, esp. 20-21). God's grace is so strong it can forgive any sin, no matter how terrible. In fact, the greater the sin, the more magnified God's grace becomes. When a *great sinner* is forgiven, God's grace is much more magnified than when a morally good person repents and is forgiven. As stated, the greater the sin or sinner, the more God's grace is magnified and glorified.

Now note: some theologians and philosophers, in particular those who stress the law, carry this argument even farther in their position against grace. No doubt Paul was asked this question time and again by the legalists who hounded and fought against him and just did not understand the wonderful grace of God. They argued that if forgiveness is by grace, then is sin not a good thing? Should we not continue in sin so that God will have more opportunity to prove His grace and become more magnified and glorified?

2. Paul's answer is the answer of righteous indignation: "By no means!" Away with such a thought! Far be it that we ever think such a thing, especially as believers.
3. The *believer's position* in Christ shows the utter impossibility of a true believer *continuing, going on in sin*. The words "going on" or "continuing" mean to practice or to habitually yield to sin. A true believer no longer practices sin and no longer yields to sin. He cannot live *without sin*, not totally, but he no longer lives *in sin*. A true believer is dead to sin, and a dead man cannot do anything: he cannot think, speak or move. How can a dead man live any longer in sin? It is utterly impossible! It is totally against nature! *Positionally*, the true believer has died to self and has been *placed* into Christ to live for Him. He now possesses the *divine nature*, God's very own nature (2 Pet. 1:4). He is *placed* and *positioned* in Christ which means he is dead to self and alive to God. How can he dare think that he can go ahead and sin because God will forgive him anyway?

Note another fact: when a man turns *to* God, he turns *away from* sin. It is a contradiction to say that when a man turns to God he turns to more and more sin. God's grace does not bring a man to God so that he can be *free to sin* more; God's grace brings a man to God so that he can be *free from sin* and its guilt and judgment. Grace does not give license to sin any more than a dead man is able to move about and sin.

II. ***Romans 06:03–05 Believer is Placed into Jesus Christ***

First, the believer has been *baptized or placed into Jesus Christ*. This is the first thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. This is one of the most glorious truths in all of Scripture, yet so much controversy has raged over what is meant by baptism that the glorious meaning has often been bypassed. The meaning of baptism is discussed in

another note. In the present note the glorious truth of these verses is being concentrated upon. Christians everywhere agree that baptism is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a true believer is immersed, he is proclaiming to the world that he is being identified with Christ:

=> by being placed under the water, he is proclaiming that he has died and been buried with Christ.

=> by being raised up from the water, he is proclaiming that he has been raised from the dead with Christ to live a new life.

Now note three glorious points.

1. The believer is immersed, placed into or identified with Christ *in* death. This is the believer's position in Christ. Very simply, if the believer really died when Christ died, then he has died to sin and is freed from sin and its penalty and punishment. What a glorious gift from God! What a glorious position to receive from God's wonderful grace!

What happens is this. When a person really believes in Christ, then God takes that person's faith and counts it as the death of Christ. That is, God counts the person as having died in Christ. God takes the person's faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and counts the person as *participating in Christ's death*. God counts and considers the person...

- to have died in Christ's death.
- to be placed into Christ's death.
- to be identified with Christ's death.
- to be a partaker of Christ' death.
- to be in union with Christ's death.
- to be bound with Christ in death.

When a person truly honours God's Son by trusting Him, God honours that person by spiritually placing him into the death of Christ. What is it that causes God to do so much for the believer? Very simply, His love for His Son. God loves His Son so much that He will do anything for anyone who honours His Son by believing and trusting Him.

Now note the point: if the believer is *counted* by God as having been immersed into the death of Christ, then the believer...

- has died to sin
- has died to the penalty of sin
- has died to the judgment of sin
- is freed from sin
- is freed from the penalty of sin
- is freed from the judgment of sin

This means that the rule and reign and the habits and desires of sin no longer have control over us. Sin *ceases* to have a place or a position in our lives. We are free from sin, free from...

- sin's habits
- sin's control
- sin's bondage
- sin's enslavement
- sin's rule and reign
- sin's guilt

It means that we no longer live “in” sin, in the *position and place of sin*. We cannot live without sin, not perfectly, but we *are free* from living “in” sin. We no longer practice and desire sin. We desire and practice righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do. And as glorious as this is, it means that we are freed from the condemnation of sin, the terrible punishment that shall be measured out in the awful day of judgment.

This is the believer’s position in Christ. He is immersed, buried, placed into and identified with Christ in death. And having died, the believer never has to be under the rule and reign of sin and its judgment again. He is a partaker of Christ’s death, bound and united to Christ in death; therefore, he is dead to sin and all its effects.

However, note a critical point. A true believer is a person who *really believes*. This simply means he repents, confesses, obeys and is baptized. It is this person whom God credits as having died in Christ. This is the glorious position of the true believer.

Rom 6:3 *Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

1 Cor 12:13 *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

2 Cor 4:11 *For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.*

Gal 3:27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

2. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ in His resurrection. The same picture of baptism is used again to strike home this glorious truth. God counts the true baptized believer as having been raised in Christ. God takes the believer’s faith (and baptism as stated in this passage) and counts the person as participating in Christ’s resurrection. He counts and considers the person...
 - to be raised in Christ’s resurrection.
 - to be placed into Christ’s resurrection.
 - to be identified with Christ’s resurrection.
 - to be a partaker of Christ’s resurrection.
 - to be in union with Christ’s resurrection.
 - to be bound with Christ in His resurrection.

Note two significant points.

- (1) Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father. This tells how our glorious position in Christ happened. It happened by the glory and the power of God. The “glory” (*doxa*) of God means all the excellence of God; all that He is in His might and power, love and grace, compassion and mercy. It means all His attributes; His omnipotence (all power), omniscience (all knowing), omnipresence (being everywhere) and sovereignty. In this particular passage it refers primarily to His glorious power. It was the glory of His might and power that raised up Jesus from the dead, and it is by the glory of His might and power that he *places and positions* us in Christ.

1 Cor 6:14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

2 Cor 13:4 For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

- (2) God's purpose for raising us up with Christ is dynamic and meaningful. It involves living in a whole new life. The word “live” or “walk” (*peripateo*) means to walk about, to walk step by step, to control and order our behaviour, to constantly and habitually walk in “a new life.”

Think about it for a moment. When Christ died, he laid aside His old life and left it behind Him. Therefore, when He arose, He took on a totally new life, a changed life, a resurrected life. It is His new life. His changed and resurrected life that is given to us. In the Bible the word “new” often carries the idea of purity, righteousness, holiness, godliness. The believer...

- receives a “new birth” (1 Pet. 1:23; 2:2).
- receives a “new heart” (Ezk. 11:19; 18:31)
- becomes a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).
- puts on the “new self” or “new man” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

God's very purpose for *placing* us in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ is that we might walk in Christ, walk soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. The true believer puts off the “old self” or “old man” of sin and puts on the new self of righteousness and godliness. He lives a pure, clean and holy life.

Col 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Eph 1:19-20 And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Gal 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Eph 4:1 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

Col 2:6 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*

3. The believer is immersed, placed into or identified with the most glorious hope: that he shall be planted (immersed) in the very likeness of Jesus' resurrection. This simply means that...

- as Jesus was raised to a *new life*, so shall the believer be.

Eph 2:5-6 *Made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

Col 3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

- as Jesus was raised to *live with God*, so shall the believer be.

John 14:2-3 *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

1 Th 4:16-17 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

2 Tim 2:11 *Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him [identified with His death], we will also live with him.*

(See *Baptism*, Rom 06: 03-06.)

III. Romans 06:06–07 Believer's Old Self was Crucified with Christ

Second, the believer's old self was crucified with Christ. This is the second thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. The Greek definitely uses the past tense: "Our old self *was* crucified with Christ." It was a *once-for-all act* that Christ Himself effected. He took our "old self" to the cross with Him when He died. The "old self" means...

- our old man
- our corrupt nature
- our old life
- our depraved nature
- our sinful self
- our unregenerate nature
- our sinful life
- our sinful nature

Our "old self" means our old life without God, the old sinful life that is immersed or identified with Christ in death. Now note three points.

1. The old self was crucified so that “the body of sin” might be destroyed or done away with. The “body of sin” is not plural (sins) but singular (sin). Sin is seen as a *body*, a *whole package*. The human body is seen as the *seat* of sin and as the *instrument* of sin. It is seen as containing and embodying and packaging all sin within itself. The idea is that all sin within a believer is destroyed, conquered, forgiven and crucified with Christ. The believer is freed from sin. He starts anew, and he *stays* clean and free from sin by walking in constant confession and fellowship before God. (1 Jn. 1:9).

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

Rom 8:36 *As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

2 Cor 4:11 *For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

2 Tim 2:11 *Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him.*

2. The old self was crucified to *enable* and to *empower* the believer to renounce sin. The believer is not to serve sin; he is to renounce it, knowing that it has been crucified and put to death in Christ. By the power of the cross, sin is not to be served; it is...

- to be renounced
- to be rejected
- to be refused
- to be denied
- to be repudiated
- to be conquered

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

Rom 6:11 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Col 3:3, 5 *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God....Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

1 Pet 4:1-2 *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

3. The clearest of all illustrations is given to show the believer's position in Christ. He is not to serve sin because he is dead; he has been crucified with Christ. And a dead man is freed from sin. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins, our belief is counted as righteousness; our belief makes us acceptable to God once for all. And it does something else just as wonderful: it gives us constant access into God's presence as we walk about day by day. This means that as we pick up the pollutions of this world and fail here and there, we can constantly come before God and ask forgiveness; and when we ask, He forgives. This is the way we are freed from sin: by constantly walking in *open confession* before God, praying all day long for His forgiveness. And just as He promises, He always forgives us (1 Jn. 1:9). Why does He do such a glorious thing as freeing us from sin eternally?

=> Because we honour His Son by trusting Christ's death to free us from sin.

=> Because He loves His Son and will honour any man who so trusts His Son. He will honour the man by doing exactly what the man believes. If the man honours Christ by *believing* that he is freed from sin by the death of Christ, then God counts the man as being freed from sin.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1-2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Col 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord [by faith], continue to live in him.

Rom 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

This is the glorious position of the believer in Christ: his old self "was crucified" with Christ in order to free him from sin. Note the most glorious and striking truth: it is all through the *death of Christ*. Our salvation is *through the death of God's dear Son*.

IV. Romans 06:08–10 Believer Lives with Christ Now and Forever

Third, the believer *shall live with Christ both now and forever*. This is the third thing the believer should know about his position in Christ. We know and possess absolute assurance

and confidence that “we will...live with Christ.” The idea is that we will live eternally with Him. What gives us such belief and absolute assurance?

1. Christ has conquered death — once-for-all. Think about it. Christ has already died. Now we are to *know*..

- “Since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again.”
- “Since He was raised...death no longer has mastery over him.”
- Since Christ was raised He is freed from death.

2 Tim 1:10 *But [God] has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

2. Christ now lives forever to God. We are to know...

- that Christ died to sin once for all.
- that Christ now lives in the presence of God for ever.
- that Christ lives to God; that is, He lives in an unbroken devotion and service to God.

The believer is to live to God through all eternity, beginning right now, from the moment of his conversion. Death has no more dominion over him. He is immersed or placed into the resurrected life of Christ. He is an eternal person *now*, therefore, he is to live to God beginning right now, even as he will live unto God through all eternity.

John 16:28 *“I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”*

John 17:11 *“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one.”*

Mark 16:19 *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.*

Luke 22:69 *“But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”*

Phil 2:8-9 *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.*

Eph 1:20 *Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Heb 10:12 *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.*

Thought 1. This, of course, means that we too shall be living on and on in an unbroken devotion and service to God — forever.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 17:24 *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ■*

ROMANS 06:03–05 BAPTISM

Men have dissected and argued over how a person is “saved” so much that the preciousness, and in too many cases, the truth of the experience has been lost. The result is a confused public. Many people think if they have been baptized and do half-way right, then they are saved and God will never reject them. Others, who are highly disciplined and have reformed their lives, think they are as acceptable to God as anyone else because they do live moral and decent lives. A confused public, including both those within and without the church, is basing their eternal fate upon one or more of the following. They think they are saved...

- by baptism
- by doing good deeds
- by being as good as they can
- by faith
- by repentance
- by church membership

Much of the confusion has been caused by men *overstressing or misunderstanding* one of the truths of Scripture. Too often too many of us have been guilty of abusing Scripture; and once we have taken a strong position, we have been unwilling to back off or to give balance to the whole truth, even when we realized we had gone too far. It is time for us to totally commit our lives to the Lord, to lay aside our *bandwagons* and exhaustively labour to proclaim the whole truth both to the church and to the world. Again, it is time for the truth to be proclaimed, the whole balance of Scripture — time for us to help straighten out the confusion of the public, for many within the

church are deceived and are without Christ; and the world cannot come to Christ with a genuine experience until they come as *Scripture dictates*.

In the passage before us an argument rages over the word baptism (v. 3-4). Does “baptism” mean the actual baptism experience of a person, or is it being used in a symbolic or spiritual sense? Those who hold to baptism being essential for salvation say it means the actual baptism experience; whereas those who hold to salvation by faith tend to say it is speaking symbolically and spiritually. And the battle rages on. The great tragedy is...

- many within and without the church have become confused.
- many have never had a true experience of salvation because they have never heard the truth of Scripture.
- many have never heard nor understand the truth of Scripture.
- many have mocked the divisiveness and irrelevance of church positions.

And all with whom we have failed to share the truth are doomed, and we are responsible. Now, note several points.

1. Scripture speaks strongly in unmistakable terms on the subject of salvation — on just how we are saved — and to an *honest and thoughtful mind* it speaks clearly.

a. We are saved by *faith*.

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. (see Jn. 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10)*

b. We are saved by *obedience*.

Heb 5:9 *And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (see Mt. 7:21; Jn. 15:10; Rev 22:14).*

c. We are saved by *repentance*.

Luke 5:32 *“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (see Acts 11:18)*

d. We are saved by *confession*.

Mat 10:32-33 *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” (see Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Jn. 4:15)*

e. We are saved by *baptism*.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Now, in all honesty, what does this show? Is it not that the true experience of salvation is a *whole* experience, a *comprehensive* experience, an experience that involves the *whole life* of a believer? Is salvation not a past and a present and a future experience? (See *Salvation*, I Cor. 1:18.)

What Scripture declares is that salvation is looked upon as the *whole* experience of a truly *born again* person. When Scripture speaks...

- of believing in Christ, it means a person who repents, confesses, obeys and is baptized.
- of obedience to Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, confesses and is baptized.
- of repentance toward Christ, it means a person who believes, confesses, obeys and is baptized.
- of baptism in Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, confesses and obeys.
- of confession to Christ, it means a person who believes, repents, obeys and is baptized.

Now note a most critical point: just because a person professes and does some of these things does not mean the person is saved. Just because a person...

- professes faith,
- lives a moral and good life,
- is baptized,
- claims to live as Jesus taught,

...does not mean he is saved. The power of salvation is not in these things, not in profession and moral goodness and baptism and the teachings of Jesus. The power to save is *in Jesus Christ Himself*, in believing that He is the crucified Saviour, the Son of God Himself who has the power to save.

The point is this: Scripture speaks of the true believer in different ways at different times, anyone of which means that he is saved. Scripture says that a *true believer* is a person...

- who believes.
- who obeys.
- who repents.
- who confesses.
- who is baptized.

Each of these terms is *inclusive*, that is, sometimes Scripture uses each term to include the others. The present passage says that believers who “were baptized

into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.” Paul is using the symbolic meaning of our baptism experience to picture our “death” and “resurrection” with Christ. He is not saying that baptism is the “substance” that has the power to “place” us into Christ. Only God has that power. Paul is saying that the baptized person (as a person who believes, repents, obeys and confesses) is the person who is *placed* into the death of Christ. Our baptism experience is being used as an inclusive term, not as an exclusive term or in an exclusive sense.

2. Among the believers in the New Testament, faith and baptism were not so much two experiences as two parts of one experience (F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. “The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” p. 136). A person who genuinely believed *was baptized*, and a person who was baptized *was to be a genuine believer*. To be “baptized into Jesus Christ” did not mean “to be baptized *without faith*” and to “believe in Jesus Christ” did not mean to believe *without being baptized*. Scripture definitely indicates this. Therefore, *when Scripture speaks of baptism*, it means that baptism is for a genuine believer: a genuine believer is baptized, and a baptized person is to be a genuine believer. There just was no such thing as a *genuine believer* who was not baptized unless he was providentially prohibited, and there was no such thing as a *genuinely baptized* person who was not to be a true believer.
3. Scripture definitely teaches that the power to make a person acceptable to God, to place a person into Christ is not in the water of baptism, but *in Christ*. For example, this is the whole point of Romans up to this point, the whole teaching of justification. If the power to save is in water, then what do we do with the thousands who have been baptized and live like the devil himself, the thousands who show no changed life at all?

The power is definitely in Christ; Christ is the One who saves. And He saves the person who believes, not the person who is baptized. This is clearly evident from the *unholy lives lived by so many who have been baptized*.

However, as mentioned in point one, the person who truly believes does repent and he does turn from his old life to follow Christ. He does what Christ says, and the first commandment is to follow Him in baptism. Baptism is the very first act, the very first proof that a person believes and repents.

There is another way to see the connection between faith and baptism or between our union with Christ and baptism. The power to save — to make a person acceptable to God — is not in the waters of baptism, but in Christ; therefore...

- not everyone who is baptized is saved. Their unbelieving and unholy lives prove the fact.

- Everyone who is saved will be baptized immediately as an *act of belief and obedience* in Christ. The person will be baptized unless he is physically unable.
4. The physical symbol is never the truth itself; it is a picture of the truth. No physical substance has the power to bring about anything spiritual. The whole physical world and everything in it passes away, including water. Physical substances can symbolize spiritual truth, but they cannot be the cause or the power to bring about the spiritual reality. If a physical substance such as water baptism had such power, it would mean that the spiritual reality had its basis in the physical and material which passes away. And if the basis passes away (water baptism), then the substance (spiritual salvation) itself would also pass away. Another way to say the same thing is this: the physical can never penetrate nor create the spiritual; it is the spiritual that must penetrate and create the physical. Philosophically, we must always remember this or else we doom ourselves and cause thinking men in the world to mock us. Why? Because the philosophical and thinking men of the world know that if we are saved by water (the physical and material), then we are doomed; for no physical substance can impart something it does not have, an eternal quality (eternal life, salvation, forgiveness of sins). Only the spiritual — only God and His power — can impart the spiritual quality of eternal life and salvation and forgiveness of sins. God can impart spiritual salvation and then say, “Immersion in water is a picture of what I do for you. And if you really believe in Me, then the very first evidence of your faith is for you to be baptized.”
 5. Practical experience tells us that belief and baptism are *separate acts* involved in salvation, yet they are both involved. They are both involved in the sense that baptism is an immediate act of obedience and repentance. A true believer should be baptized, and no true believer will fail to be baptized unless he is providentially stopped.
- => Example one: a believer flying across country leads a person to truly trust Christ to save him. The plane crashes and the new believer is killed before he can be baptized. He is not doomed to hell. Scripture teaches no such thing. To say he is doomed is to say that the power of salvation is in the waters of baptism and not in God’s Son. In fact, to say such is to dishonour God’s Son, to take the love and power and grace that belongs to Him and to ascribe it to a physical substance. If the new believer truly believes within his heart, truly honours God’s Son by trusting Jesus to save him, God accepts that man. God accepts the man because he honours God’s Son, and God will do anything for any man who honours His Son. The man is thereby accepted by God, accepted because he honours God’s Son by believing and committing his life to Him.
- However, the man who reaches the ground and is not baptized as soon as he can make arrangements is not genuine. His faith is suspect, for he is not putting God

first in his life. He has not turned to Christ *ready* to obey and live for Him. The man who truly believes is the man who is not only ready to obey Christ, he *does* obey and live for Christ.

=> Note another example. There are masses of people who live in arid and desert countries where thousands are starving and dying of thirst. What about them and baptism? What if a missionary leads some to Christ. Are they to be immersed when there is so little water and multitudes are dying of thirst? The point is clear, not only in the teaching of Scripture, but in the love of God and in practical terms. A person is justified *by faith*, but he is to be baptized immediately, as soon as he possibly can. Why? Because he is genuine, he does believe in the Lord Jesus, loving Him and wishing to obey Him in all things and thereby fulfilling all righteousness. However, his salvation does not depend upon baptism; it depends upon God's dear Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. □