

If You Were A Roman

In this post, I'm dealing with a controversial and more often than not, a mis-used passage; Romans 6:1-6:

Romans 6:1-6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **4** 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. **5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: **6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

...that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ
...were baptized into his death
...we are buried with him by baptism into death

If you were one of the Roman recipients reading this epistle, what would have been your interpretation of Paul's references to 'baptism', as being?

A key to understanding this passage is in **Romans 1:16**... "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

First, a little background. The MAIN FOCUS of John the Baptist's, Jesus & His disciple's pre & post cross ministries was the JEW & NATION of ISRAEL. Restoration of the kingdom back to Israel was based on her repentance... "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; **20** And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" **Acts 3:19-20**

...And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you

In fact, after the persecution of Stephen (**Acts 7**), the dispersed was preaching to the Jew only... "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." **Acts 11:19**

...preaching the word to none but unto THE JEWS ONLY

Now, add to this that some years later there was an agreement that... "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." **Galatians 2:9**

...that we (Paul & Barnabas) should go UNTO THE HEATHEN
...and they (James, Cephas (Peter) & John) UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION (Jew)

This throws a monkey wrench into the theology of those denominations & preachers who cannot discern between the preaching & teaching commissions found in Mark 16 & Matthew 28, in not

recognizing Israel's current state of blindness in part (**Rom 11:25**)! If Paul wasn't sent to baptize (**1Co 1:17**) and Peter & company yet focus was on the Jew, then who was to kick-start baptizing all nations in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:?" **Matthew 28:19** Perhaps a topic for another post?

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, is saved in Acts 9. In preparation for Paul's ministry & message, God twists Peter's arm to visit a Gentile household living by faith to then witness these Gentiles receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost prior to being baptized. This was exactly opposite of what Peter was preaching to the Jew (Cp. **Acts 2:36-38 w/10:1-4, 44-48**).

In Acts 13-14, the 'door of faith' is opened up to Gentiles through the ministry of Paul and we then find similar commentary written by Paul, as in Romans 6:

Galatians 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

...For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. **13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

...For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles

Again, if you were a recipient of the book of Romans, at the time of Paul's writing, and/or now of Galatians or 1 Corinthians, what baptism is Paul talking about?

A major theme of Paul's writings surrounds 'being in Christ'... "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." **2 Corinthians 5:17** There were those Jews who were in Christ before Paul (**Rom 16:7**), and now the addition of Gentiles being added via 'of faith', was a mystery from various perspectives (**Rom 16:25-26; Eph 3:1-9; Col 1:27**).

How exactly was Paul going to illustrate what God was now doing 'in Christ'? Very masterfully, Paul points to the formation of a previous household created under Moses (Heb 3)... "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; **2** And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; **4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**

...how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea

...And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea

The Gentiles that were being saved in the mid-Acts period, under Paul's ministry, came from within & around the synagogues so were familiar with Israel's formation under Moses (**Acts 13:14-16; 42-48**).

Unfortunately, 'baptism', more often than not, is associated with water. However, there are more 'dry' baptisms than wet... "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:" **Matthew 3:11**

...baptize w/water... w/the Holy Ghost... and w/fire

Paul illustrates how a nation was baptized (consecrated/identified) 'unto' the man Moses.

Exodus 14:21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.

Exodus 14:29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

In this national baptism 'unto' Moses, it was the LORD that caused the sea to separate and Israel walked across on dry land. This was NOT A BAPTISM w/WATER! The only ones baptized w/water and via immersion were Pharaoh's army... "For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea." **Exodus 15:19**

...and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them;
...but the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

So, how would this make sense to the Jewish & Gentile believers at the time of Paul's writings? It wasn't only Israel that was identified 'unto' Moses... "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children. **38** And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle." **Exodus 12:37-38**

...And a MIXED MULTITUDE went up also WITH THEM

Just as a 'mixed multitude' (Gentiles) was also part of Moses' household in the Exodus, now Gentiles are part of the household of God through Christ (**Heb 3; Gal 6:10; Eph 2:11-22**). As Israel & a mixed multitude was baptized 'unto' Moses, Jew & Gentile were now being baptized 'into' Jesus Christ, 'by' one Spirit. As with Moses, in the parting of the sea, it is via the faith of the operation of God... "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: **12** Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." **Colossians 2:10-12**

...Buried with him in baptism
...wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God

Briefly, there are two false teachings on Romans 6:1-6, by various denominations: 1st. That baptism w/water puts one into Jesus Christ. Baptism w/water NEVER put anybody 'into' Jesus Christ; not under John the Baptist or that of Jesus & His disciples pre & post cross ministries. 2nd. That baptism w/water pictured the death, burial & resurrection of Christ. Under same ministries, neither the baptizer or the baptized ever understood that baptism w/water was a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins and Jesus' disciples ministered

3 years without even understanding or knowing Christ would be raised from the dead (**Mark 1:1-5; Lk 18:31-34; John 20:8-9**). Significance of the element of water in baptism w/water never changed!
Romans 6 is dry as a bone!

In conclusion... baptism 'into' Jesus Christ 'by one Spirit' happens that moment in which one trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal saviour, whether Jew or Gentile... "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." **1 Corinthians 6:17** We are complete in Christ! One must not confuse this baptism, 'by' the Spirit into Jesus Christ with that of the baptism 'with' the Holy Ghost!

Salvation today is by grace, through faith & without works (**Rom 10:1-10; Eph 2:8-9**).