

Saved: God's Plan of Salvation, Teacher's Guide

Week 6: Baptism into Christ: Buried and Raised

Romans 6:3–7

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This is one of the central texts of the entire study, and it is mostly affirming ground, so teach it with clarity and joy. Doctrinally, Romans 6:3–7 establishes that baptism is the God-appointed moment of union with Christ: we are baptized “into Christ Jesus,” “into his death,” “buried... with him,” and raised “to walk in newness of life.” The passage settles three things our heritage has always confessed: baptism is immersion (the burial and resurrection imagery requires it), baptism is into Christ (it is the point of union, not a symbol of a union already complete), and baptism inaugurates new life (it is the doorway from the old self to the new). This is the high point toward which faith, repentance, and confession have been moving.

Be ready to address two errors gently but clearly, because this passage answers both. The first is the widespread view that baptism is merely an outward symbol of a salvation already received, an optional ceremony with no saving significance. Paul's language of being baptized “into” Christ and His death will not bear that weight; the union happens here. The second is the opposite error, that baptism is a meritorious work by which we earn salvation. Romans 6 frames baptism not as a human achievement but as a being acted upon: we are buried and raised, passive verbs, by the grace and power of God (compare Colossians 2:12, “through faith in the powerful working of God”). Hold these together: baptism is essential because God appointed it as the place of union, and it is in no way meritorious because it is grace received by an obedient faith, not a wage earned.

Aim the lesson at wonder and new life, not merely correct doctrine. For those already baptized, the goal is to recover the joy and weight of what happened to them and to call them to live as the raised people they are. For any not yet baptized, this lesson is the natural, warm invitation to come to the water and be united with the Savior they have trusted. Keep it joyful: this is a funeral that ends in resurrection.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul says that those who “have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (v. 3). What does it mean to be baptized “into Christ” and “into his death,” and what does this teach us about the connection between baptism and the saving work of Jesus on the cross?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open the phrase “baptized into Christ.” The little word “into” signals transfer and union: baptism moves a person from being outside of Christ to being in Him. This is the same language Paul uses in Galatians 3:27, “baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” To be “in Christ” is to be where every spiritual blessing is found (Ephesians 1:3).

Press the second phrase: “into his death.” Baptism connects us specifically to the saving event, the death of Jesus. It is not that the water has power, but that in this God-appointed act we are joined to the crucified and risen Lord. The blood of Christ, shed at the cross (Week 1), is applied to us here, where faith reaches its appointed expression.

Refute the notion that this empties the cross of its sufficiency. Baptism adds nothing to Christ’s finished work; it is the moment we are united with that finished work. The cross is the fountain; baptism is where we come to drink. To say we are baptized into His death is to magnify the cross, not to rival it.

Keep the focus on Christ, not the water. The power is in the Lord and His death and resurrection, received by faith. Baptism without faith is only a bath; baptism as the expression of faith is union with the Savior.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The transferring force of “into”: from outside Christ to in Christ (Galatians 3:27)
- Baptism joining us specifically to Christ’s saving death
- The blood of the cross applied at the appointed moment of faith
- Baptism magnifying, not rivaling, the finished work of the cross
- The power in Christ received by faith, not in the water itself

Discussion Prompts

- What does the word “into” tell us about what baptism does?
- How does baptism connect us to the death of Jesus on the cross?
- How would you answer someone who fears that this teaching detracts from the cross?

Question 2

Student Question:

Paul says we were raised to “walk in newness of life” (v. 4). If you have been raised with Christ, your daily life is meant to look different from your old one. Where is the “newness of life” most visible in you right now, and where is the old way still lingering?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question presses the purpose clause of verse 4: we are raised “in order that... we too might walk in newness of life.” Baptism is not an end; it is the start of a transformed walk. Ask students where that newness is actually visible.

Help them take honest inventory. New life shows in concrete places: speech, temper, honesty, purity, generosity, how we treat family. Where do people who knew the old us see a real difference, and where would they say nothing has changed?

Move toward one lingering old pattern. Resurrection is not only a past event but a daily summons. Name one habit of the old self still walking around, and consider what it means to reckon it dead this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Baptism as the beginning of a transformed walk (v. 4)
- New life made visible in concrete arenas of conduct
- Honest inventory of change and non-change
- Reckoning one lingering old pattern as dead

Discussion Prompts

- Where is the newness of life most visible in you right now?
- Where would others say the old way is still hanging on?
- What is one old pattern Christ is calling you to leave buried this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul describes baptism as being “buried... with him by baptism into death” and then raised (v. 4). How does the picture of burial and resurrection help explain why baptism is an immersion, a going down into the water and a rising up again, and how does the form fit the meaning?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Connect form and meaning. Paul says we were “buried... with him by baptism.” Burial requires covering; the imagery of being buried and raised fits immersion, a going down under the water and a coming up again. The very meaning of the Greek word baptizo is to dip, plunge, or immerse.

Show that the early church practiced immersion for this reason. The act is a living parable: the believer disappears beneath the water as into a grave and rises as from an empty tomb. Sprinkling or pouring cannot picture a burial; immersion does. The form is not an incidental detail but part of the proclamation.

Tie it to the resurrection of Jesus. As Christ was truly buried and truly raised, so the believer is buried and raised in the likeness of that event. The act preaches the gospel every time it is performed.

Avoid making the mode an idol. The point is union with Christ in death and resurrection; immersion matters precisely because it embodies that union. We immerse because the meaning demands it, not as a bare rule.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The burial-and-resurrection imagery requiring immersion
- The meaning of baptizo: to dip, plunge, immerse
- Immersion as a living parable of the gospel
- Baptism patterned on Christ's own burial and resurrection
- Mode mattering because it embodies the meaning

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the burial imagery point to immersion rather than sprinkling?
- How does the act of baptism itself preach the gospel?
- Why does the form of baptism matter, and how do we avoid making it a bare rule?

Question 4

Student Question:

Coming up out of the water is meant to be the start of a genuinely new way of living. What does "walking in newness of life" look like in the ordinary places of your week, and what is one old pattern you sense Christ calling you to leave buried this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question makes newness concrete. Ask students to picture "newness of life" not as a vague glow but as specific changes in an ordinary week, at the dinner table, in traffic, at the keyboard, in private.

Help them name one old pattern to leave buried. The logic of Romans 6 is that the buried self should stay buried; we are not to go digging it back up. Identify one habit, attitude, or relationship pattern that belongs in the grave.

Offer encouragement and a practical handle. Walking in newness is empowered, not white-knuckled; it flows from union with the risen Christ. Pair the resolve with prayer and, where useful, accountability.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Newness of life as specific, ordinary-week change
- Leaving the buried self buried (not digging it back up)
- Identifying one old pattern to surrender
- New life as empowered by union with the risen Christ, not white-knuckled

Discussion Prompts

- What does walking in newness of life look like in your ordinary week?
- What old pattern is Christ asking you to leave buried this week?
- How does drawing on your union with the risen Christ make that change possible?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul writes that we are “united with him in a death like his” and “in a resurrection like his” (v. 5). What does it mean that baptism unites us with Christ, and why does this show that baptism is far more than a mere symbol added on after a person is already saved?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open verse 5: “united with him.” The word pictures being grown together, joined organically, like a graft fused to a tree. Baptism is the appointed point of this union with Christ in both His death and His resurrection.

Draw the doctrinal conclusion the question asks for. If baptism is where we are united with Christ, it cannot be a mere symbol of a union that already exists. A symbol points to a reality elsewhere; Paul says the reality happens here. This is the heart of why our heritage has insisted that baptism is more than an outward sign.

Address the common objection that this makes baptism a “work.” Union is something done to us; we are united, buried, raised. The believer is the recipient, not the achiever. The grace is God’s; the faith is ours; the union is the gift received in the appointed way.

Keep Christ central. The value of baptism is entirely in the One we are united with. To be joined to Christ is to share His death to sin and His risen life, which is everything.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “United with him”: organic, grafted union (v. 5)
- Baptism as the point of union, therefore more than a symbol of a prior union
- Union as something received, answering the “work” objection
- The worth of baptism located entirely in Christ, the One we are joined to

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to be “united with” Christ in baptism?
- Why does union at baptism show it is more than a symbol of something already true?
- How does seeing baptism as something done to us answer the charge that it is a work?

Question 6

Student Question:

Many people today think of baptism as an outward symbol of a salvation already received, an optional ceremony rather than the moment of union with Christ. How does Paul’s teaching here challenge that view, and how does it change things to see baptism as the appointed place where a believing heart is joined to the Savior?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question directly confronts the symbol-only view, so handle it clearly and graciously. Many sincere believers have been taught that one is saved first (often by a prayer) and baptized later merely to symbolize it publicly. Romans 6 reverses the order: baptism is into Christ and into His death, the point of entry, not a snapshot of a completed transaction.

Let the wider New Testament reinforce the point. Acts 2:38 ties baptism to forgiveness; Acts 22:16 to washing away sins; Galatians 3:27 to putting on Christ; 1 Peter 3:21 says “baptism now saves you.” The cumulative witness is consistent: baptism is the appointed place where faith receives what God gives.

Be pastoral about those taught otherwise. The goal is not to score points but to help people obey the Scriptures joyfully. Many devout people have simply never seen these texts laid side by side. Teach with patience and warmth.

Restore the wonder. Seeing baptism as the moment of union with Christ does not burden it; it dignifies it. It is not a hoop to jump through but a wedding to attend, the day we are joined to the Savior we have trusted.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The symbol-only view and Paul’s reversal of its order
- The cumulative New Testament witness (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21)
- Teaching the differently-taught with patience and grace
- Baptism dignified, not burdened, when seen as union with Christ

Discussion Prompts

- What is the practical difference between baptism as a symbol and baptism as union?
- How do the other New Testament texts on baptism reinforce Paul’s teaching here?
- How can we discuss this graciously with those taught the symbol-only view?

Question 7

Student Question:

Paul says “our old self was crucified with him... so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin,” and “one who has died has been set free from sin” (vv. 6–7). What does it mean that our “old self” was crucified with Christ, and how does union with Christ in His death break the power of sin over us?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open verses 6–7: our “old self was crucified with him... so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin,” and “one who has died has been set free from sin.” The decisive break with sin’s mastery happens through union with Christ’s death.

Explain the “old self.” It is who we were in Adam, under sin’s dominion. In union with Christ, that self is reckoned crucified; its claim of ownership over us is legally and really broken. We are no longer slaves who must obey sin; we are free people who may now refuse it.

Clarify the nature of the freedom. Paul does not say sin is now impossible for the Christian, but that sin’s mastery is broken. We can still yield, which is why he goes on to command, “do not let sin reign” (6:12). Freedom is a status to be lived out, not a switch that removes all struggle.

Connect status and summons. Because we have died with Christ, we are free; therefore we are to live free. The indicative (you have died to sin) grounds the imperative (so stop serving it). Grace changes our standing and then empowers our walk.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The crucifixion of the old self in union with Christ (v. 6)
- Sin’s mastery broken: from slaves who must obey to free people who may refuse
- Freedom as broken dominion, not the end of all struggle (Romans 6:12)
- The indicative grounding the imperative: you died to sin, so live free

Discussion Prompts

- What is the “old self,” and what does it mean that it was crucified with Christ?
- How is freedom from sin’s mastery different from sin being impossible?
- How does our death with Christ become the ground for refusing sin daily?

Question 8

Student Question:

Paul speaks of being “set free from sin.” What is one specific sin or pattern that has enslaved you, and what would it look like this week to live as someone who has genuinely died to it and been set free in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question makes freedom concrete. Ask each student to name one sin or pattern that has held them in bondage, the place where they most need to hear “set free from sin.”

Apply the logic of union. Because we have died with Christ, we no longer have to obey that sin as a helpless slave. The first step is often to stop believing the lie that we are powerless, and to reckon ourselves dead to it as Paul commands (6:11).

Pair truth with means. Living free draws on union with Christ, the word, prayer, and the help of the church. Encourage one concrete step and, where appropriate, the courage to invite a trusted believer into the struggle.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Naming the specific bondage where freedom is needed
- Reckoning ourselves dead to sin (Romans 6:11)
- Rejecting the lie of powerlessness
- Living free through union, word, prayer, and the church

Discussion Prompts

- What sin or pattern has most enslaved you?
- What would it look like this week to live as one who has died to it?
- Who could you invite to walk with you toward freedom in that area?

Question 9

Student Question:

Romans 6 presents baptism as the very point at which we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection, buried with Him and raised to new life. How does this passage hold together the truth that baptism is essential, the God-appointed moment of union with Christ, and the truth that it is in no way a meritorious work we perform to earn salvation, but the glad response of a heart that has already heard, believed, repented, and confessed? In other words, how is baptism neither an empty symbol nor a human achievement, but the place where grace and obedient faith meet?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block, and it is the theological center of the lesson. Hold two truths together that the wider religious world tends to split apart. First, baptism is essential: Romans 6 presents it as the very point of union with Christ in His death and resurrection. To be baptized is to be buried with Him and raised with Him; this is not decoration but the doorway. Resist any teaching that makes it optional or merely symbolic.

Second, and just as firmly: baptism is in no way a meritorious work. Notice the grammar of the passage. We are baptized, buried, raised, united, set free, all things done to us. The believer is the recipient of grace, not the earner of salvation. Colossians 2:12 says we are raised with Him “through faith in the powerful working of God.” The power is God’s; baptism is simply the appointed place where faith receives the gift. No one boasts in having been buried.

Show how this dissolves the false dilemma. Much of the religious world assumes you must choose: either baptism saves (and therefore we earn salvation by a work) or salvation is by grace (and therefore baptism is just a symbol). Romans 6 refuses both halves of the dilemma. Baptism is the moment grace is received by an obedient faith. It is essential without being meritorious, because receiving a gift in the appointed way is not the same as earning it. The empty hand that takes a gift has not purchased it.

Tie it back to the whole plan of salvation. Baptism is not a lone act but the culmination of a single believing response: hearing, faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are the motions of one living faith taking hold of Christ. Baptism is where that faith is joined to its Savior. Separating baptism from faith produces a bare ritual; separating faith from baptism produces a faith that never arrives where God appointed it to go.

Land it with joy. The same grace that planned our salvation appointed this glad moment of union. Baptism is not the price of admission we grudgingly pay; it is the wedding day of the soul, the believer joined to Christ, buried out of the old life and raised into the new. Let students feel the wonder, not the weight.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Baptism as essential: the God-appointed point of union with Christ (Romans 6:3–5)
- Baptism as non-meritorious: passive verbs, grace received, not salvation earned (Colossians 2:12)
- Dissolving the false dilemma of “saving work” versus “mere symbol”
- Receiving a gift in the appointed way is not the same as earning it
- Baptism as the culmination of one believing response: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized
- Baptism as the joyful wedding of the soul to Christ, not a grudging price

Discussion Prompts

- How can baptism be essential and yet not a work that earns salvation?

- What is the false dilemma many assume, and how does Romans 6 dissolve it?
- How does baptism fit together with faith, repentance, and confession as one response?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over this passage, the burial, the resurrection, the new life, the freedom from sin. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth. If you have not yet been buried and raised with Him in baptism, what is keeping you from the water? If you have, how is He calling you to live more fully as one already raised?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the wonder of the passage into a personal step. Ask each student to name one specific way Christ is forming them through the truth of burial and resurrection.

Read the room honestly. For the believer who has never been immersed into Christ, the truest next step is the water itself, and this lesson invites it warmly and without manipulation; be ready to help today. For the already-baptized, the step is to live as one truly raised, leaving the buried self buried.

End at the empty tomb. Frame the response with joy: in Christ the old self is buried and a new self has risen. Let students leave not merely informed about baptism but moved by what union with the crucified and risen Lord means for who they now are.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Naming one specific formation step from the passage
- The water itself as the next step for the not-yet-baptized believer
- Living as the raised people we are, for the already-baptized
- Response anchored in joy at union with the crucified and risen Christ

Discussion Prompts

- What is one way Christ is forming you through this truth of death and resurrection?
- If you have not been buried and raised with Him in baptism, what is keeping you from the water?
- If you have, how is He calling you to live more fully as one already raised?