

First Burial, Then Resurrection



Foundations (Day 133)
by Derek Prince

What is the relationship between this central truth of Christ's atonement and the ordinance of Christian baptism? The answer to this question is simple and practical. In the natural realm, after every death there follows a burial. The same order applies also in the spiritual realm: first death, then burial. Through faith in Christ's atonement we reckon ourselves, according to God's Word, to be dead with Him; we reckon our old man, the body of sin, to be dead. Thereafter, the next act appointed by God's Word is the burial of this old man, this dead body of sin.

The ordinance by which we carry out this burial is the ordinance of Christian baptism. In every service of Christian baptism there are two successive stages: 1) a burial, 2) a resurrection. These two stages of baptism correspond to the two stages of the inner transformation within the believer who accepts Christ's atonement on his behalf: 1) the death to sin, 2) the new life to righteousness and to God.

Christian baptism in water is, first, a burial in a typical grave of water and, second, a resurrection out of that grave into a new life that is lived to God and to righteousness. The burial is the outward expression of the death to sin, the death of the old man; the resurrection is the outward expression of the new life to righteousness and to God. The New Testament declares this to be the purpose of Christian baptism.

> "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4)

> "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2:12)

In both these passages the two successive stages of baptism are clearly set forth:

1. We are buried with Christ by baptism (literally,

immersion) into His death.

2. We are raised up with Him, through faith in the working of God's power, to walk with Him in newness of life.

Apart from this basic truth of burial and resurrection, there are three other important facts about baptism contained in these verses. First, by true Christian baptism we are baptised into Christ Himself – not into any particular church or sect or denomination. As Paul says:

> "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27)

There is no room here for anything less than Christ: Christ in His atoning death, and Christ in His triumphant resurrection.

Devotional

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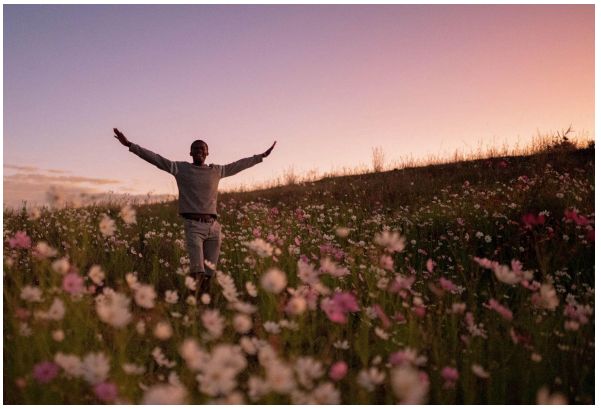

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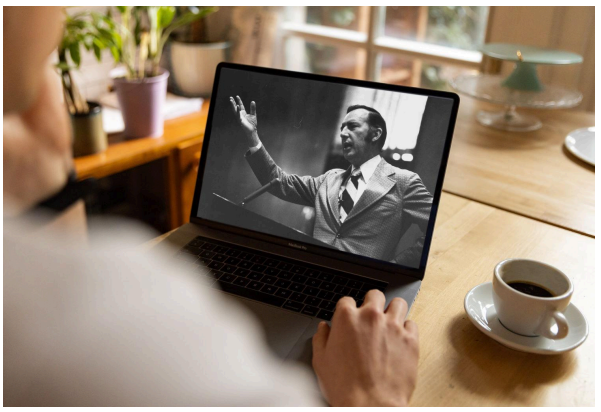

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