

Romans 6; Lord's Day 26

GOD'S SIGN OF BAPTISM

- I. Its institution.
 - A. Before baptism, God first gave circumcision as a sign of our being forgiven by demonstrating separation from our sins.
 - 1. First, the cutting away of a piece of flesh represented the cutting of the sins of the flesh (Col. 2:11).
 - 2. Second, this sign indicated His people were separated from the world.
 - 3. God always taught that real circumcision was of the heart (Deut. 10:15; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:29).
 - B. Baptism came in the place of circumcision, having the same meaning (Col. 2:11,12).
- II. Baptism's meaning.
 - A. Real baptism (like real circumcision) is spiritual and speaks of spiritual washing and cleansing (Titus 3:5).
 - B. In addition to washing is the idea of our incorporation into Christ: "buried with Him" into His death and we "are risen with Him."
 - 1. We are so cleansed in Jesus' sacrifice that we are pure enough to have fellowship with the Holy One.
 - 2. This is the meaning of the formula Jesus has us use: "in the name of ..." means into fellowship with the Triune God.
 - C. This is our real experience when our faith takes hold of God's powerful work of raising Jesus from the dead.
- III. The sacrament assures believers.
 - A. Our conscience can be free (good) toward God because baptism assures us that all our sins have been forgiven us.
 - B. My baptism gives me powerful incentive to live an antithetical life, i.e., he is an enemy to worldliness.
 - C. And the knowledge of my baptism gives me strength to fulfill my calling and to bear life's burdens.
 - D. Finally, when I fall into sin, I must not despair of God's unchanging mercy and forgiveness.
 - E. Let us remind ourselves that we were baptized and let us remember what it signifies: washed by and with Christ.