

Baptism as Unification with the Death and Resurrection of Christ (Romans 6 : 1–14)

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Theological reflection is conducive to experiencing the mystery of baptism. St. Paul devoted much attention to this mystery of the faith and thus he can be a guide on the road to find the understanding that the faith requires. One of the key methods that he uses is exploring the meaning of the rite of baptism. The Apostle to the Nations explains the meaning of being immersed in water and the emergence of a person who had just been baptized from it (Romans 6 : 3–4). This rite is greatly symbolic and means participation in Christ's death and resurrection. This article includes an exegetical-theological study of Romans 6 : 1–14 and aims to study how St. Paul understands and explains to Christians baptism as the inclusion of the believer into Christ's death and resurrection.

1. The Context, Structure, and Genre of Romans 6 : 1–14

In the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul contrasts Christ's justice with the Divine justice that many people would like to have the right to through their own efforts. The epistle contains the presentation of all humanity's sinful past (Romans 1 : 18–3, 20), the internal struggle of every person (Romans 7 : 14–25), the gratuitousness of salvation (Romans 3 : 24), and the effectiveness of Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 5 : 6–11) in which we can participate through the sacrament of baptism (Romans 6 : 3–11). St. Paul presents the state of man's sinfulness as well as the magnanimity of God's love for man (Romans 1 : 18–3, 20, 5–7).¹

At the beginning of the sixth chapter, St. Paul changes his form of addressing the reader to the first person plural, which indicates the beginning of a new

1 Cf. W. Rakocy, *Listy Apostoła Pawła. Wprowadzenie i omówienie*, Kraków 2008, p. 13–14.

section.² Romans 6 : 1–4 can be divided up into three fundamental parts: the introductory argument regarding the relationship between sin and grace presented as a question (verse 1); a negative response and its substantiation (verses 2–11); and final encouragement to remain under the influence of grace (verses 12–14).³ In this article, the second and third parts will be divided up as follows: 1) The experience of baptism in Romans 6 : 2–5; 2) Death for the sake of ridding oneself of sin (Romans 6 : 6–7); and 3) The unification of the baptized Christian with the resurrected Christ (Romans 6 : 8–14).

The pericope Romans 6 : 1–14 is the first diatribe discussion in the Romans 5 : 1–8, 39 block. Paul talks to a presumed opponent and responds to the questions regarding the relationship between sin and God's grace.⁴ He deals with the problem of sin, which was dominant in the era inaugurated by Adam and is still present in those who commit personal sins (Romans 5 : 12–19) and that caused the appearance of the boundlessness of God's grace. The apostle responds to the question of his implicit interlocutor about if we can continue sinning in order to give evidence of an even greater effectiveness of God's grace. The apostle replies in the negative and presents numerous arguments.⁵ In the pericope Romans 6 : 1–14, he gathers several comparisons and uses various forms of expression. Paul does not avoid repetition and he aims to show that baptism binds the faithful with Christ's death and resurrection.

2. The Experience of Baptism

In his reasoning against Christians' careless sinning, St. Paul notes that in the sacrament of baptism the believer receives the gifts of Christ's redeeming

2 Cf. J. Zerski, *Literatura epistolarna Nowego Testamentu, cz. 1. Listy Protopawłowe*, Opole 2013, p. 280.

3 Cf. A. Pitta, *Lettera ai Romani*, Milano 2001², p. 243, as cited in: S. Witkowski, *Współukrzyżowani z Chrystusem i wolni od mocy grzechu*, „Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 62 (2009) nr 2, p. 103, <https://doi.org/10.21906/rbl.200>.

4 Previously, the diatribe style appeared in Romans 2 : 1–3. 20. 27–31. It is characterized by the formulation of questions, immediate responses, and the personification of sin, which is presented as a person, a coercive force that tries to dominate the life of the believer; cf. S. Witkowski, *Współukrzyżowani z Chrystusem i wolni od mocy grzechu*, op. cit., p. 103; W. Barclay, *List do Rzymian*, tł. K. Wiazowski, Warszawa 1979, p. 127.

5 Cf. G. Rafiński, *Grzech ludzkości i dar usprawiedliwienia (List do Rzymian)*, [in:] *Dzieje Apostolskie. Listy św. Pawła*, oprac. A. S. Jasiński, S. Mędała, G. Rafiński, W. Rakocy, H. Skoczylas, B. Widła, Warszawa 1997, p. 335–337 (Wprowadzenie w Myśl i Wezwanie Ksiąg Biblijnych, 9).

mercy and becomes free from sin, while sinful behavior cannot be reconciled with his or her Christian identity.⁶ Christ, Who died and was resurrected, allows man to participate in His death and resurrection. Through baptism, we died for sin. “How can we who died to sin yet live in it?” the apostle asks in Romans 6 : 2. He refers back to the rite of baptism (Romans 6 : 3–4).⁷ An important part of it is immersion in water, which means participation in Christ’s death and burial.⁸ However, this is not “drowning” in that water, because shortly afterwards emergence out of the water thanks to God’s power occurs; it is a sign of participation in Christ’s resurrection.⁹ Thus the faithful enter into Christ’s “new life” (Romans 6 : 4). The effect of this rite is the right to inherit God’s Kingdom. The baptized can fully take advantage of it when the old person dies inside him or herself.

For this pericope, the following expression is of key significance: ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν (“We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death”). It is worth analyzing the meaning of the verb βαπτίζω. This verb means “to bathe;” “to be cleansed” in the ritual sense; “to be immersed in water;” “to baptize;” “to

6 Cf. W. Misztal, *Chrzesz: umrzeć z Chrystusem, by zmartwychwstać z Chrystusem. Chrzcielny charakter życia chrześcijańskiego wg Rz 6, 1–11*, „Kieleckie Studia Teologiczne” 3 (2004), p. 401.

7 In his treatise *De baptismo (On Baptism)*, Tertullian (d. after 220) presents the rite of baptism, which includes renouncing evil and immersion with a triple trinitarian questioning. The candidate for baptism would respond “I believe” to every question and be immersed in water after each answer. After baptism, he or she was anointed with oil. Tertullian recalls the laying of hands, which is connected to the imparting of the Holy Spirit. Tertullian clearly differentiates the baptism that cleanses one of sins from the baptism that prepares one for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These two realities are celebrated by Tertullian through one act, although those are two sacraments – cf. B. Nadolski, *Leksykon liturgii*, Poznań 2006, p. 242.

8 An excerpt from the *Jerusalem Catecheses (Lecture 20, Mystagogical, 2, 4–6)* confirms this direction of interpretation: “After [being anointed with the exorcised oil], you were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulchre which is before our eyes. And each of you was asked, whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and you made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and ascended again; here also hinting by a symbol at the three days burial of Christ. For as our Saviour passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so you also in your first ascent out of the water, represented the first day of Christ in the earth, and by your descent, the night; for as he who is in the night, no longer sees, but he who is in the day, remains in the light, so in the descent, as in the night, you saw nothing, but in ascending again you were as in the day. And at the self-same moment you were both dying and being born; and that Water of salvation was at once your grave and your mother” – cf. *Liturgia Godzin*, vol. II: *Wielki Post. Okres Wielkanocny*, Poznań 1984, p. 469.

9 Cf. G. Rafiński, *Grzech ludzkości i dar usprawiedliwienia (List do Rzymian)*, [in:] *Wprowadzenie w myśl i wezwanie ksiąg biblijnych: Dzieje Apostolskie. Listy św. Pawła*, op. cit., p. 335

give baptism;” “to allow to be baptized;” “to accept baptism.”¹⁰ In the pericope under study, the verb βαπτίζω is used in the past historic form, which indicates a one-time historic act.¹¹ St. Paul emphasizes that baptism is immersion (Gk. εἰς) in Christ. The idea of the mystical understanding of baptism is present here.¹² In this case, the preposition εἰς seems to indicate “belonging; the transfer of the baptized as property; placing him or her in the sphere of Christ’s activity; marking him or her as belonging to Christ.”¹³ At the same time, here there is an allusion to the fact of Christ’s death, in which “all have died” (2 Corinthians 5 : 14). Immersion in Christ and becoming connected with him is tantamount to immersion in (incorporation into) His death (verse 4). When explaining baptism, Paul accents the community with Christ initiated through baptism. This is a permanent reality.

The baptized becomes bound with Christ “through a death like His” (Romans 6 : 5). What does this mean? Paul emphasizes the victory over sin. The verb ὁμοίωμα is interesting; apart from its onetime appearance in Revelation 9 : 7, it appears in Paul’s epistles and means “image” or “likeness” (Romans 1 : 23, 5 : 14, 6 : 5, 8 : 3; Philippians 2 : 7).¹⁴ The death of the baptized is to a certain degree similar to Christ’s at of death. In Christ’s case, death was the end of the earthly sinless life. In the sacrament of baptism, the dying of the “old person” takes place. Thus the idea of likeness concerns the moment of the end.¹⁵ The baptized who “died for sin” can no longer live in it. Through baptism, the faithful die with Christ not for sin; therefore, baptism is the final separation from sin. This sin is of a positive nature, as it is death with Christ, which separates the faithful from that which destroys their ties to God.¹⁶ Such are the consequences of unity with Christ, Who died and was resurrected in order to conquer sin and death.

10 R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 1997, p. 901.

11 Cf. K. Romaniuk, *List do Rzymian. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz*, Poznań–Warszawa 1978, p. 144.

12 Cf. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, transl. and ed. G. W. Bromiley, vol. 1, Grand Rapids 1964, p. 539.

13 F. Leenhardt, *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Romains*, Genève 1981, p. 88; as cited in: W. Misztal, *Chrzest: umrzeć z Chrystusem, by zmartwychwstać z Chrystusem. Chrzcielny charakter życia chrześcijańskiego wg Rz 6, 1–11*, op. cit., p. 402.

14 The verb ὁμοίωμα also appears in Mark 4 : 30 – cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 3544.

15 Cf. K. Romaniuk, *List do Rzymian...*, op. cit., p. 1445.

16 Cf. Jean-Noël Aletti, *List do Rzymian*, [in:] *Międzynarodowy komentarz do Pisma Świętego*, Warszawa 2000, p. 1434.

Next, St. Paul discusses burial and crucifixion together with Christ (6 : 4). The verb *συνθάπτω* means “to be buried with.”¹⁷ In addition to the excerpts under study, it also appears in the New Testament in Colossians 2 : 11–12, where Paul writes: “In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Paul’s motif of incorporating the faithful into the death of resurrection of Christ through the rite of baptism was described in the Epistle to the Colossians 2 : 12 using the verbs “buried with” and “raised with.” Through the accumulation of verbs beginning with the prefix *συν* (“together,” “in concert with”) Paul accents the soteriological status of the faithful as those included in Christ’s redemptive work and His victory over death.¹⁸

In the pericope under study, Paul did not write “buried like Christ” but “buried with Him [Christ].” This means that the believer was laid in the tomb in Jerusalem together with Him. His death on the Cross and burial were at the same time the death and burial of Christians.¹⁹ Through this act, the faithful experience death for sin, burial, and resurrection like Christ. Paul uses one of his favorite verbs *συνθάπτω* (“buried”), which he writes with *συν* (“with”), “buried with.” In this way, he expresses that the Christian lives in unity with the resurrected Christ; he or she will find fulfillment when a certain day he or she finds him or herself “with Christ” in glory.

When commenting on this text from the Epistle to the Romans, St. Thomas Aquinas notes that “during baptism, there is a three-time immersion, but not only to confess faith in the Trinity, but also to symbolize the three days of Christ’s burial. And just as the three days of burial make up only one burial, similarly the three-time immersion is undertaken during only one baptism. This is also why the baptism ceremony takes place in the Church on Holy Saturday, when we remember Christ’s burial, and on the eve of Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Spirit, with Whose power the baptismal waters gain purifying properties, in accordance with John 3 : 5: ‘no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.’” One should also note that in

17 Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 4776.

18 Cf. *List do Filomena. List do Kolosan*, wstęp, przekł. z oryginału, koment. B. Adamczewski, Częstochowa 2006, p. 263 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Nowy Testament, 12).

19 Cf. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Chrzest*, [in:] *Słownik teologii św. Pawła*, red. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, D. G. Reid, Słownik teologii św. K. Bardski, tł. Laura Canghellaris et al., Warszawa 2010, p. 114–115.

the earthly sequence, one first dies and then is buried, while in the spiritual sequence the funeral occurring in baptism causes the death of sin.”²⁰

Paul emphasizes that Christ was raised from the dead, “by the glory of the Father” (Romans 6 : 4). This thought is complemented by the expression: “by the glory of the Father.” The verb δόξα (see: 2 Corinthians 12 : 4; Ephesians 1 : 19) here has the meaning of “strength.” Furthermore, “glory” is an expression for God in generally and accents His greatness, majesty, and power.²¹ It indicates that the effectiveness of the work of resurrection was ascribed to the Father, especially to His “glory.” Just like the miracles in the Old Testament (see: Exodus 15 : 7, 11; 16 : 7–10) were ascribed to *kābôṭ Jahwe* (the glory of Yahweh), here they are ascribed to Christ’s resurrection. God’s glory shines in the face of the resurrected Christ (2 Corinthians 4 : 6) and gives Him “power” (Romans 1 : 4), which is “life-giving” (1 Corinthians 15 : 45). This leads to the transformation of the Christian (see: 2 Corinthians 3 : 18), who together with Christ is surrounded by glory (see: Romans 8 : 17).²² Baptism leads to the identification of the Christian with the beloved Christ, making him or her capable of leading Christ’s life.

The Apostle to the Nations emphasizes that a person freed from sin must make progress in his or her new life. In the expression οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν, the verb περιπατέω plays a key role. It appears in the New Testament ninety-five times. Its literal meaning is: “to walk,” “to wander,” “to take a walk” (see, for example: Mark 11 : 27). Furthermore, it is used metaphorically to mean to behave ethically. Only once is it used to refer to Jesus’ behavior: “This is the way we may know that we are in union with him: whoever claims to abide in him ought to live (just) as he lived” (1 John 2 : 5b-6a). In most cases, the metaphorical application of the verb περιπατέω appears in the Pauline epistles; it appears in the Epistle to the Romans four times.²³ The verb “to conduct oneself” is among Paul’s favorite expressions. It is borrowed from the Old Testament (2 Kings 20 : 3; Proverbs 8 : 20) and is

20 Św. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Wykład Listu do Rzymian*, w tł. i oprac. J. Salija, Poznań 1987, 474–475.

21 Cf. H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief*, Leipzig 1997, p. 194 (Herder Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 6); cf. także: H. Langkammer, *List do Rzymian. Tłumaczenie, wstęp, komentarz*, Lublin 1999, p. 79.

22 Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *List do Rzymian*, [in:] *Katolicki komentarz biblijny*, red. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, red. nauk. wydania pol. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2001, p. 1286.

23 Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 3920.

used to describe the Christian's conscious, ethical behavior.²⁴ Apart from the excerpts under study, Paul writes: "For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done: by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous decree of the law might be fulfilled in us, who live not according to the flesh but according to the spirit" (Romans 8 : 3–4). Elsewhere, he writes: "let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy" (Romans 13 : 13; see also: Romans 14 : 15). All these citations indicate a new quality of life resulting from unity with Jesus, manifested in not succumbing to the desires of the flesh, but in obedience to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this conduct is manifested in a feeling of dignity and respect for oneself and other, as well as in an attitude of love for one's neighbor. Although the expression consisting of the verb περιπατέω and the phrase "new life" is not explained in greater detail here, but is only described generally, the thematic context sheds much light on understanding of it. The person united with Christ through baptism can lead a new, conscious life devoid of sin. The aim that God realizes in His redemptive work is to give life fully. The term περιπατέω ("novelty") indicates that this is not above all a chronological change. Following Romans 6 : 11, we can say that "initiation – entry into the novelty of life" is the same as the beginning of life "in Christ." Communion with Christ's death and resurrection, strangulated through baptism, is to be undertaken through the constant renewal of everyday life. The act of baptism begins this process. The figure of Jesus Christ, in Whom the movement from death to new life has already been realized, is a guarantee of the realization of this process. It is through baptism that the faithful "have grown into union with him" (Romans 6 : 5). The adjective σύμφυτος means "united,"²⁵ "grown together," "bound together," "united."²⁶ Apart from the excerpt under study, it does not appear in the New Testament. The verse sounds as follows: "For if we have grown into union with him through a death like His, we shall also

24 Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *List do Rzymian*, op. cit., p. 1286; cf. K. Romaniuk, *List do Rzymian...*, op. cit., p. 147.

25 The word σύμφυτος can mean sticking to, uniting, or the tying together of two different things, or connecting them to the limits of complete unity, such that each has lost its own distinctiveness; cf. J. Stępień, *Teologia św. Pawła. Człowiek i Kościół w zbawczym planie Boga*, Warszawa 1979, p. 107.

26 R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 4715.

be united with Him in the resurrection.” St. Paul once again emphasizes the unification of the baptized with Christ the living Person. This occurs through “union with Him through a death like His” (Romans 6 : 5). This means that through baptism the faithful have become like Him in death.

3. Dying for Sin (Romans 6 : 6–7)

The Apostle to the Nations emphasizes Christ’s current situation. Although He was resurrected from the dead, He remains dead to sin in the sense that He is definitively separated from it. Paul writes: “We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin” (Romans 6 : 6). This sentence contains several key words that require analysis. The expression: “our sinful body might be done away with” refers to man’s entire earthly existence. The second important phrase is “old self,” literally: “old person” (ὁ παλαιός ἄνθρωπος). This expression can be created by Paul himself seeking inspiration from Jesus’ teachings. Jesus precluded the possibility of the co-existence of what is old with what is new (see: Matthew 9 : 16, Mark 2 : 21, Luke 5 : 36).²⁷ The adjective παλαιός appears in the New Testament nineteen times.²⁸ It has literal meaning in reference to old things of the past (see: Matthew 9 : 16–17; Mark 2 : 21a-22; Luke 5 : 36a-37, 39; 2 Corinthians 3 : 14; 1 John 2 : 7). Furthermore, it is of metaphorical significance with regards to man’s sins and desires. Apart from the pericope under study, it appears in two places. In St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians, in which the apostle writes about the old person, he gives the following advice: “Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices” (Colossians 3 : 9). There is a similar passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians: “you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires” (Ephesians 4 : 22). St. Thomas Aquinas explains this verse as follows: “Antiquity in the person was caused by sin, as it is through sin that the goodness of nature is ruined. This antiquity rules over the person as long as the person is subordinate to sin. [...] The antiquity of sin can mean either the same state of sin, or corruption caused by sinful acts, or

27 Cf. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, vol. 2, Poznań-Kraków 1999, p. 38.

28 Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 3696; cf. J. Gnilka, *Teologia Nowego Testamentu*, Kraków 2002, p. 147.

the habit of sinning, consisting of some necessity of sinning, and also in the source of sin resulting from original sin.”²⁹ The old self is the one who in his or her behavior is prone to the desires of the weak nature, rebelling against God and considering the body to be the guiding principle behind one’s own behavior. This “old person” and his body have been crucified in Christ. The phrase “old person” is the opposite of the “new person” living in unity with Christ and being liberated from sin by Him.

Paul uses the expression *συσταυρόομαι* (“crucified with Him;” Romans 6 : 6). It appears in the New Testament only in the passive form: “to be crucified with.”³⁰ literally it refers to the evildoers (Matthew 27 : 44; Mark 15 : 32; John 19 : 32), and figuratively to the crucifixion of a specific person through baptism. Apart from the excerpt under study, St. Paul also uses it in the Epistle to the Galatians: “For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2 : 19–20). Bound together with Christ in His death and resurrection, the faithful die and are resurrected. The “old person,” who is crucified together with Christ and whose sinful body is destroyed, experiences death. Destroying the sinful “me” through baptism and incorporation into Christ means liberation from the yoke of sin. Thus Christians can no longer focus on sin. Paul writes about dying with Christ, referring back to His own experience: “For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2 : 19). “For a dead person has been absolved from sin” (Romans 6 : 7). Just as the deceased are not prone to temptation and no longer live in sin, people who sacramentally die with Jesus are also definitively liberated from sin.

29 Św. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Wykład Listu do Rzymian*, op. cit., 479–480.

30 R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 4818.

4. The Union of the Baptized with the Resurrected Christ (Romans 6 : 8–14)

Paul moves from “being dead to sin” to Living for God,” which expresses the theological purpose of separation from sin (Romans 6: 11). In Romans 6 : 8–9, Paul writes: “If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.” Christians united with Christ participate in His fate. The baptized experience death with Christ and at the same time are destined for life with Christ due to His resurrection. However, its full realization is a future matter. What is realized at that point is a new life with Christ (Romans 6 : 8). An important matter present in this sentence is unity with Christ, which Paul emphasizes twice, and the beginning and of the verse: *σὺν Χριστῷ* (“with Christ”). In the Pauline epistles, the phrase “with Christ” is part of Christocentric mysticism and often means “in Christ.”³¹

Key to this sentence is the expression: *Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν*. The verb *ἐγείρω* means “to awake;” “to be raised;” “to rise from a lying position;” “to rise from one’s death bed;” “to resurrect, rise from the dead” (*ἐκ νεκρῶν*); “to rise against someone.”³² This verb appears in the New Testament 144 times. It is used in two ways with respect to Christ’s resurrection: first, as the activity of God the Father resurrecting Christ; second, as the act of Christ’s rising from the dead. St. Paul interchangeably uses both forms. In the periscope under study, we are dealing with an expression in which the emphasis is placed on “Christ arisen from the dead.” In the Epistle to the Romans, this same use appears in 4 : 24–25, among other places: “it was also for us, to whom it will be credited, who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.” Here, Paul speaks of the salvific value of Christ’s resurrection. It is already finished but the baptized have not yet been resurrected; nonetheless, they already live in Christ. Faith in the resurrected Christ was known to the Romans. The life of the resurrected Christ, Christ in the glorious body completely belongs to God. St. Paul tries to show an analogy between Christ’s situation and that of the baptized.

31 Cf. E. Käsemann, *An die Römer*, Tübingen 1980, p. 153; cf. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 58.

32 R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 1453.

Christ	The baptized
died and "raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him" (Romans 6 : 9) died for sin only once, as to his life, he lives for God" (Romans 6 : 10)	he died to sin once and for all; and we are "living for God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6 : 11).

Only Christ achieved full victory over death. Although they have been liberated from a spiritual death, Christians are still prone to the death of the body. However, they believe that since they live in union with Christ, like Him they will take part in eternal glory. The new life of Christians is not the subject of a sensual experience; it can only be the subject of faith. Christ rose from the dead in order to allow people have a new way of life and give them a new life-giving source: the Spirit.³³ The most characteristic trait of the new life is that it does not end. The Christian united with Christ through death and resurrection become one with his or her Redeemer. Although the Christian remains him or herself, Christ lives and acts in him or her.

In verses 12–14, Paul encourages two practical attitudes that the baptized person is capable of. First, he summons the baptized: "Therefore, sin must not reign over your mortal bodies so that you obey their desires" (Romans 6 : 12).³⁴ The noun ἐπιθυμία, which means "desire" or "lust," appears in the New Testament thirty-eight times. It is used in reference to desires that are both ethically good and evil. The latter ("lust") is frequently used in the Pauline epistles. Apart from the excerpt under study, Paul uses this term also in Romans 1 : 24, where he writes: "Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies." This is a description of the punishment that God sends on idolaters. People become impure and degraded. In Romans 13 : 14 we read: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh. "In Paul's view, the process of putting on Christ during baptism should be constantly renewed. In practice, this consists of not being too concerned for one's body and not giving way to its desires. Upon baptism, the Christian becomes capable of obedience to God and does not have to be subordinate to corporal lusts, although he or she can still be prone to temptations.

Next, the Apostle to the nations says to the baptized: "And do not present the parts of your bodies to sin as weapons for wickedness, but present

³³ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *List do Rzymian*, op. cit., p. 1287.

³⁴ In the oldest text of Romans (P⁴⁶) in texts by Irenaeus and Tertullian it is "be obedient to Him." This version is accepted by R. Popowski, *Grecko-polski Nowy Testament. Wydanie interlinearne z kodami gramatycznymi*, Warszawa 1994, p. 721.

yourselves to God as raised from the dead to life and the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness” (Romans 6 : 13). This excerpt develops and in its way presents the warning of Christ Himself that one cannot serve two masters. The person cannot simultaneously serve sin and justice. Paul’s language becomes military language when he speaks of “weapons for wickedness” and “weapons for righteousness.” The Greek term *ὄπλον* means “tool,” “weapon,” “arms,” “armor,” “shield.”³⁵ In the literal sense it appears only in John 18 : 3, while Paul uses it three times apart from the excerpt under study. In Romans 13 : 12 we read: “The night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness (and) put on the armor of light.” The phrase “armor of light” suggests that we are preparing for battle. “Armor” is a metaphor for God’s help. Paul lists the elements of this armor in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 10 : 4nn and in the Epistle to the Ephesians 6 : 11. Similarly, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 6 : 7 (see: 10 : 4) Paul says: “on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God [...] in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left.” The weapon that the soldier’s left hand uses is a defensive one, while an offensive one is in his right. Paul wants to emphasize that all the means he used in overcoming difficulties in life were used to preach the Gospel.³⁶ This means that for Paul ethics is the site of battle in a hostile world dominated by sin, the place where Christ’s victory appears and is confirmed. Because the baptized are united in Christ, the effects of this union and at the same time Christ’s ultimate victory over death are present even in their bodies. By freeing oneself of sine once, the Christian has only one Lord whom he or she should served, consciously becoming His slave. Thus Paul can say with complete certainty: “For sin is not to have any power over you” (Romans 6 : 14). If there appears in this place the imagery of giving oneself to service of someone else, it could be a reference to soldiers ready for battle, although it instead is reminiscent of slaves called to do their duties, as in verse 16.³⁷

35 R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., 3572.

36 Cf. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 190.

37 Cf. Craig. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, red. nauk. wyd. pol. K. Bardski, W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2000, p. 322.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we must state that Paul presents the power of God's grace, which overcomes all sin. Through baptism, the Christian is immersed in Christ's paschal mystery and is gifted the grace of redemption. This paraklesis presents Christians who went from death to life and have become "new persons." The "old person" overcome with sin was buried with Christ once and for good. In baptism, the Christian comes into union with Christ, His death and resurrection, and glorious life in God. The Christian is therefore capable of openness to obedience to God and to throwing off bad tendencies related to sin. He or she becomes God's soldier, serving in an army fighting for the freedom of God's children and for justice. This is possible because he or she is open to God's grace.

Abstract

Baptism as Unification with the Death and Resurrection of Christ (Romans 6 : 1–14)

Paul shows the power of the grace of God, which transcends all sins. Through baptism, the believer is immersed in the paschal mystery of Christ and blessed with the grace of salvation. In this paraklesis, Paul presents Christians who have passed from death to life and have become "new people." The "old self" possessed by sin has been forever buried with Christ. In baptism, the believer is brought into union with Christ in His death, resurrection, and glorious life in God. The believer is thus enabled to open to the obedience to God and to reject evil tendencies associated with sin. The Christian becomes a soldier of God, serving in the army fighting for the freedom of the children of God and for the justice. This is possible because he is open to the grace of God.

Keywords: St. Paul; Letter to the Romans; baptism; sin; grace; burial with Christ; Crucifixion with Christ; old man; new life

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