

## If We Died With Him

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In II Timothy 2:11, the apostle Paul speaks of the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, stating that:

“This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him,

We shall also live with Him.”

In this passage, the inspired apostle makes it clear that all those who will live eternally with Jesus Christ must first have *died with Him*. What does this statement mean? How does someone die with Christ, and what does that death involve?

One passage that sheds light on these questions is Romans chapter 6, where we read in the first four verses:

“How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized 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.”

From these verses, it is clear that we come into contact with the death of Christ through baptism. Reading further along in this same chapter, we note verse 8: “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” This is the exact same principle stated in II Timothy 2:11! **If we died with Christ in baptism, we shall live with Him in eternal life.**

Furthermore, verse 11 emphasizes what exactly this death is: “...consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” So, these verses speak not of a physical death but of a death of a spiritual death of the body of sin

through being baptized: a death in the likeness of Jesus Christ’s own death to destroy the power of sin once for all (Rom 6:5,10).

Therefore, we learn from these verses that death in the likeness of Jesus takes place when a person turns away from sin and is baptized (an immersion, or burial, symbolic of Jesus’ own burial in the tomb). Evidently, this symbolic burial in baptism is for the remission of sins, just as the apostles taught in Acts 2:38. A person who dies in the likeness of Jesus Christ is raised from baptism to “walk in newness of life,” as a new spiritual person, freed from sin and starting anew in the sight of God (Rom 6:4, cf. I Pet 1:3-4).

It is important to see that the death to sin as described in Romans 6:1-11 involves two actions:

- 1) God takes away the body of sin through baptism (having sole authority to forgive transgressions of the past)
- 2) The baptized person then refuses to live any longer in the iniquity which caused spiritual separation from God in the first place.

In other words, baptism is not the end of this spiritual journey: repentance and baptism form the first step in this death for eternal life, after which **the new Christian must live in a manner “dead indeed to sin, but alive to God”** (Rom 6:11). Therefore, the resultant victory, “we shall also live with Him” (II Tim 2:11; Rom 6:8), is available to children of God who have not only been initially forgiven of sins through baptism and faith in Jesus Christ, but who also carry out their commitment to present themselves as “instruments of righteousness to God” (Rom 6:13). This is precisely the conclusion

that Paul makes both in Romans 6:11-14, and in Colossians 3:3-5 where he writes:

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God...Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Let us end this short study with a warning: the apostle write, “If we died with Him, we

shall also live with Him,” and conversely it must be true that **if a person has not died in the manner described in Romans 6 and Colossians 3, he or she *shall not* live eternally with Christ.** In light of these verses, all individuals are called upon to examine themselves: do you have assurance of this reward? Have you put off the body of sin by submitting to baptism in the name of Jesus? If you have done so, are you striving to present yourself as an instrument of righteousness to God?