



The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson Number 19



DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD

^{6:1} What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ 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. ⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. – Romans 6:1-14 ^{NKJV}

INTRODUCTION

Because men are prone to be merely speculative and philosophical in their religion, the Spirit will elaborate on the impact of justification upon human conduct. When righteousness is imputed to us through faith, it has an immediate effect upon our persons. Both thought and deed are influenced by the imputation of righteousness. However, this is not automatic: i.e., it does not occur without the conscious involvement of the

individual.

THE REALITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

The new birth is very real. The stony unreceptive heart is actually removed, and a new and pliable heart is given (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). The “laws” of God are “put” into the mind and “written” upon the heart (Heb 8:10). Showing the thoroughness of this Divine work, it is also stated conversely. “I will **put** my laws

into their hearts, and in their minds will I **write** them” (Heb 10:16). This is another way of describing the change that takes place when a person is born again, justified, or made righteous. A certain accord is created within the redeemed in which they participate in the Divine nature, brought into harmony with God.

A very real peace is realized between the justified one and the Justifier. There

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. DO YOU KNOW? (6:1)
- II. WHAT SHALL WE SAY? (6:2-3)
- III. BURIED AND RAISED WITH CHRIST (6:4)
- III. UNITED WITH CHRIST IN DEATH AND RESURRECTION (6:5)
- IV. THE OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED (6:6)
- V. DEAD AND FREED FROM SIN (6:7)
- VI. WHAT WE BELIEVE (6:8)
- VII. DEATH IS ONCE (6:9)
- VIII. RECKONING AND HOW TO DO IT (6:11)
- IX. DO NOT LET SIN REIGN (6:12)
- X. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR MEMBERS (6:13)
- XI. THE IMPACT OF GRACE UPON SINNING (6:14)

is an undeniable sharing of the Divine nature, and a cleansing of the conscience from the guilt of sin. The change that takes place is not metaphorical. It is not theoretical or idealistic. However, neither is it mature, or fully developed.

AT FIRST

At first, our new life is more

intuitive than cognitive; more instinctive than intellectual or thoughtful. The “newborn babe” in Christ is not able to fully explain the change that has taken place in him, or satisfactorily interpret why his preferences have changed. The new believer is much like the blind man who was healed. He could not explain all of the ramifications of his healing, but could only say, “*One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see*” (John 9:25).

In a sense, in the beginning of our new life, feeling or disposition, is more advanced than the mind. Although we expect “*new born babes*” to be changed, have new appetites, and be determined to advance, we should not expect them to be articulate about their justification and its effects.

Because of this circumstance babes in Christ speak more in terms of “This is what I think,” than with sound spiritual reasoning and Scriptural concepts. But this is not intended to be a permanent situation.

JUVENILITY MAKES VULNERABLE

Furthermore, true confidence and assurance cannot be brought to maturity while remaining in this spiritually juvenile state. Satan directs a flood of

erroneous teaching toward such souls, seeking to dislodge them from the moorings of their faith. This inundation of error is so massive and powerful there is little hope of surviving it unless the individual grows up into Christ (Eph 4:15). In Christ Jesus, growth, or going “*on to perfection*” (Heb 6:1-3) is a necessity, not a luxury or casual option.

WHAT OUR TEXT WILL SHOW

Our text will show how justification changes our entire circumstance. It will reveal how unreasonable sin is because of where we are and the power that surrounds us. With unusual power, the Spirit will declare that we have been identified with Christ in every aspect of the Gospel: Christ’s death, His burial, and His resurrection. He will further relate this participation with a point that can easily be identified. Like the stones that were stacked in Jordan to testify of the crossing of Israel, so the Holy Spirit will erect an unforgettable memorial to our participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

In doing this, allowance is made for the development of a hearty faith and a strong confidence in the believer. In Jesus we have really died and really been raised. The effects of that death and resurrection are equally real.

WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

^{6:1} *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*” As I have said before, it is the manner of the Spirit to lead us into a thoughtful frame of mind. He is not content for us to be dominated by mere excitement or be placed under the control of inferior feelings. As is characteristic of the Spirit, He will ask the questions before He gives the answers (Rom 3:5; 4:1,3; 7:7; 9:14,30; 11:4; Gal 4:30). There is a reason for this approach. Because believers have the laws of God written upon their hearts and put into their minds, the answer of the Spirit will be more a confirmation than a revelation. He so instructs us, enabling us to be able to recognize the answer, as opposed to merely memorizing it or giving it by rote.

WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?

The statement we are to consider more deeply is this: “*That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*” (5:21). The reign of grace is now to be considered – the reign of grace within us. This reign is as real as the reign of death! Its effects are as pronounced as those of death’s rule. In fact, they are even of a greater magnitude. “**MUCH MORE, we shall be saved from wrath**” through Jesus (5:9). “**MUCH MORE, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**” (5:10). “**MUCH MORE the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many**” (5:15). “**MUCH MORE they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one,**

Jesus Christ” (5:17). “*But where sin abounded, grace did **MUCH MORE** abound*” (5:20).

What will we say in regards to this great salvation? How will we relate it to our daily lives? Have we really entered into a new dimension of living? Are we still vassals of Satan, or can we expect to turn the tables on him, living no longer in sin and disobedience? Are we to expect that God’s grace is given to us without causing newness of life? Are we to expect nothing new to transpire within us when we experience the remission of sin and the consequent imputation of righteousness?

SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN?

The flesh will reason that we should continue in sin. If grace abounds “*much more*” when sin abounds, then, flesh

reasons, the more we sin, the more grace we receive.

This is the logic of the flesh, not its precise words. Men might reason in these words. "No matter how often I sin, the Lord always forgives me." Or, "Even when I forsake Him, He never forsakes me." Or, "No matter what I do, or how deeply I fall into sin, the Lord will bring me back, because He loves me."

But all such reasoning is foolish, and unbecoming of those who have been justified. **If the reason for justification is to rid us of sin, the grace that effects justification can certainly not promote sin or excuse its presence.**

A continuance in sin is a denial of the grace of God. It evidences a refusal to be taught by grace to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit 2:11-12). The grace of God, when received, will not allow the individual to persist in sin. One may concoct a doctrine that affirms no sin or deviation from the truth can cause a person to fall away from grace. But that foolish affirmation does not make it so. In fact, a fall from grace can be effected by resorting to a system of Law to be justified. As it is written, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal 5:4). How much more is this true of the one who continues to **transgress** that law?

It might appear strange that such reasoning is introduced, for rarely will you hear someone put forth an argument like this. The Spirit, however, is not referring to a specific argument of the flesh, but to the **manner** in which the flesh reasons. It leads a person to continue to sin in the expectation of receiving grace and repeated forgiveness.

But this reason is flawed to the core. Sin is not the cause of grace. **Rather, it is the cause of Divine wrath and indignation!** Is it not written, "for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of

disobedience" (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6). **Grace comes to us because of what Jesus has done, not because of our sins!**

CERTAINLY NOT!

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." The KJV reads, "God forbid!" While this is not technically a good translation, it is a good one spiritually. It means God has not allowed for any such conclusion. Other translations read, "God forbid," ^{KJV,ASV,} Douay-Rheims "By no means," ^{NIB,Websters} "Far

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be the thought," ^{Darby} "In no way," ^{BBE} "Let it not be!" ^{Youngs} "Of course not," ^{NLT} and "Out of the question." ^{NJB}

The intent of this expression is simply this: It is not possible for such a things to even occur! It is not possible for sin to be encouraged by grace, or for it to continue where God's favor is received. **When the reign of grace begins, the reign of death ends!** Furthermore, grace cannot be increased by continuance in sin. It does not abound BECAUSE sin abounds, but WHERE it once, or formerly, abounded.

This expression reflects an utter abhorrence for sin, and particularly continuing sin. **Those who persist in sin do not need grace, but repentance.** As it is written, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim 2:25-26).

Those who are standing in "the true grace of God" (1 Pet 5:12) develop such a distaste for sin, that the thought of continuing in it is repulsive to them. Grace not only removes sin, but makes sin detestable. This is involved in the marvelous promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Let it be clear, this expression "God forbid!" or "Certainly not!" refuses to allow us to entertain the notion that grace allows for or encourages sin. It will not permit us to imagine we may indulge in sin expecting to receive grace.

HOW CAN WE LIVE IN SIN?

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Other versions read, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" ^{NKJV} "We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" ^{NIV} "How can we who died to sin go on living in it?" ^{NRSV}

To this point, only two deaths have been mentioned. **First**, the death into which all men sank because of Adam's sin (5:12,14,15,17,21). **Second**, the death of Christ (5:6,8,10). No reference has been made to any death toward sin, only death **IN** sin, and a death **FOR** sin. Now, however, a third type of death will be expounded: death **TO** sin.

Think of the magnitude of the expression "dead to sin." Among other things, this shows that becoming righteous before God is more than a mere legal transaction. Grace, which takes sin away, cannot nourish sin, encouraging its continued expression. When sin is found in the child of God, grace has been suppressed and, to some degree, rejected. It is necessary to speak strongly about this matter, else our text will have no real significance for us. **Keep in mind, this is not a description of what we were when grace found us, but what we are after grace has raised us.**

"Dead to Sin"

Sin is related to death in at least three ways. Two of these ways have already been mentioned. The spirit will now develop the third relationship.

- ❑ There is a death **“IN”** sin (Eph 2:1; Rom 5:12; 7:9). This is the condition of all men by nature.
- ❑ There is a death **“FOR”** sin (1 Pet 3:18; 1 Cor 15:3). This is Christ’s vicarious death, that fully addressed all of the ramifications of sin.
- ❑ Death **“TO”** sin (Rom 6:2,7,11; Col 3:3). This dead occurs when we are reconciled unto God, justified, and made righteous.

There are two fundamental senses in which we are *“dead to sin,”* and they are both glorious.

- ❑ First, we have been *“justified from all things,”* thereby freeing us from the guilt of sin (Acts 13:39). Our sins are not imputed to us, as God refuses to do so (Rom 4:8). The guilt of sin can no longer dominate those living by faith, and cannot condemn them. Their conscience has been *“purged”* (Heb 9:14). They are *“dead to sin.”*
- ❑ Second, since Jesus is made unto us *“sanctification”* (1 Cor 1:30), we have been separated from servitude to sin. We no longer have an obligation to sin, for we have been freed from its rule as well as its guilt. The *“new man”* has no appetite for sin, and finds it detestable. That is why grace can teach the child of God to say *“NO”* to sin in all of its forms (Tit 2:11-12).

As the Spirit will establish in the seventh chapter, the child of God is not without **exposure** to the principle, or law, of sin. In fact, that *“law”* dwells within him. *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members”* (Rom 7:23). On the surface, this may appear to contradict the affirmation that we are *“dead to sin.”* However, death to sin does not mean we are insensitive to it or wholly incapable of responding to it. It DOES mean that the part of us that is united to Christ IS fully separated from sin. As John says, *“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God”* (1 John 3:9). And again, *“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin;*

but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18). Just as surely as our old self was alive to sin and dead to God, so our new self is dead to sin and alive to God.

As the seven chapter substantiates, however, the believer is not either an *“old man”* or a *“new man.”* Instead, while he is *“in the body,”* he is a complex dichotomy in which both the *“old”* and *“new”* man reside. Elsewhere, the Spirit strictly charges us to *“put off the old man”* and *“put on the new man,”* yielding our whole persons to the *“new creation”* (2 Cor 5:17).

Beginning in this chapter, the Holy Spirit will develop the reality of the *“new creature”*—that which is *“born of God.”* He

We have been freed from the guilt of sin, and thus owe no allegiance to it. We have been joined to Christ, and are thus superior to it. We have been taught by God of its malignity and condemning power, and thus should have no appetite for it. For the child of God, sin is totally unreasonable and thoroughly distasteful.

will firmly establish that justification has yielded very real and marvelous results.

Not the least of these results is death *“to sin.”* There is a part of us to which sin has no attraction. We *“died to sin.”* ^{»NKJV,NASB,NIV,NRSV} **We were separated from its guilt and power, and owe no obligation or debt to it.** Our justification, therefore, was more than simply liquidating our indebtedness to God, or forgiving our sin. **It involved extricating us from the tyranny, or dictatorship, of sin itself.**

This deliverance is confirmed by the response of believers to the Gospel of

Christ. When men cried out *“What shall we do”* (Acts 2:37), or *“Here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized”* (Acts 8:36), or *“What must I do to be saved”* (Acts 16:30), they confirmed sin was losing its power over them. Satan would never have permitted them to cry out in such a manner if he could have stopped it. Sin itself was unwilling to let them go. Yet, their initial calling upon the name of the Lord revealed a death to sin was beginning, and would be culminated when they *“put on Christ”* (Gal 3:27). This is the death to sin of our text.

How Can We Live in Sin?

A stirring question, indeed! **How can those who have been disentangled from sin maintain their identity with Jesus and continue sinning?** What form of reasoning would support such a postulation?

To live in sin, or continue to transgress, would be to return to death IN sin, and consequent separation from God. As we will see, the Spirit is not saying it is impossible for believers to sin, for He will admonish us to cut loose from sin. **Rather, He is affirming that it is unreasonable and foolish to sin!** We have been freed from the guilt of sin, and thus owe no allegiance to it. We have been joined to Christ, and are thus superior to it. We have been taught by God of its malignity and condemning power, and thus should have no appetite for it. For the child of God, sin is totally unreasonable and thoroughly distasteful.

What Is Required to Live in Sin

In order to *“live in sin,”* or continue to sin, several things must take place. Living in sin is never innocent, never accidental, and always deliberate. To continue in sin, one must:

- ❑ Resist the Spirit, fighting against His relentless influence (Acts 7:51).
- ❑ Quench the Spirit, refusing to hear what He is saying to the churches, and choosing to thrust His influence from from us (1 Thess 5:19).
- ❑ Grieve the Spirit, choosing to indulge in things that offend Him, stifle His

influence, and compete against His gracious leading (Eph 4:30).

- ❑ Allow the entrance of an evil heart of unbelief, from which we were once delivered (Heb 3:12).
- ❑ Make a place in which the devil can work, influencing us to turn away

victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5).

- ❑ Spurn walking in the Spirit, which assures we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal 5:16).
- ❑ Reject the consideration of the return of our Lord, which hope leads us to

In a sense, it is not easy to sin. It requires a change of focus—from the Lord Jesus Christ to “*this present evil world.*” It demands earth-centeredness and worldly-mindedness. To live in sin, one must think primarily of himself, refusing to do the will of the Lord. He must return to the pit from which he was “*digged*”(

from Christ and follow him (Eph 4:27).

- ❑ Allow Satan to get an advantage of us, even though we have been delivered from him (2 Cor 2:11a).
- ❑ Be ignorant of the devices of the devil, even though God has revealed his ways and subtleties (2 Cor 2:11b).
- ❑ Refuse to hear Him who is speaking from heaven (Heb 12:25).
- ❑ Cease to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God (Col 3:2).
- ❑ Refuse to set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col 3:2).
- ❑ Fail to put on the whole armor of God, that we might stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph 6:10-18).
- ❑ Decline to add to our faith those things God has supplied in abundance (2 Pet 1:5-8).
- ❑ Refuse to hear Christ and be taught by Him (Eph 4:20-21).
- ❑ Fail to resist the devil by continuing steadfast in the faith (1 Pet 5:8-9).
- ❑ Refuse to live by faith, which is the

purify ourselves as He is pure (1 John 3:3).

- ❑ Withdraw from fellowship with Christ, who of God is made unto us “*wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*” (1 Cor 1:30).
- ❑ Fail to confess our sins to God, who is “*faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).
- ❑ Stop walking in the light, thereby losing the fellowship of kindred believers and the cleansing power of Christ’s blood (1 John 1:7).
- ❑ Be beguiled by the Devil, from whose kingdom we have been delivered (2 Cor 11:3; Col 1:13).
- ❑ Refuse to live by “*every Word of God,*” thrusting it from us rather than desiring and eating it (Lk 4:4).
- ❑ Reject the injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33).
- ❑ Fail to pay attention, giving due heed, to the message of the Gospel, allowing ourselves to drift away from it (Heb 2:1).

In a sense, it is not easy to sin. It requires a change of focus—from the Lord Jesus Christ to “*this present evil world.*” It demands earth-centeredness and worldly-mindedness. To live in sin, one must think primarily of himself, refusing to do the will of the Lord. He must return to the pit from which he was “*digged*” (Isa 51:1). To continue in sin is to once again be under the domination of Satan, from whom Jesus delivered us.

Sin, particularly continual sin, is never an innocent matter. It defies all sound reasoning, or spiritual thought. It contradicts the work of redemption, conflicts with the grace of God, stifles the work of the Holy Spirit, and negates a profession of faith.

When we are tempted to sin, we must shout to our souls, “*How can I, who am dead to sin, live any longer in it?*” We must reply as Joseph did to the wicked wife of Potipher: “*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” (Gen 39:9). If Joseph could reason in such a manner **without** the Ten Commandments, **without** a Bible, **without** the indwelling Spirit, and **without** the Gospel of Christ, how much more are those in Christ Jesus able to so think. For those in Jesus, sin is really illogical and unreasonable.

One of the great blights of our time is the casualness with which sin is approached within the professed church. A sense of its malignity and offensiveness can scarcely be perceived. It is tolerated within local congregations, and often even erupts among its leaders. All of this confirms there is very little awareness extant in the professed church of what has really occurred in salvation. Within this context, our text is most relevant. It will reason with us with great power and persuasiveness.

DO YOU KNOW?

“³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”The Spirit will now confirm that believers really are “*dead to sin.*” The death is not a figurative or symbolic one, but a very real one. It is not external, but

it is real. It cannot be perceived with the eye, but it is real. It is a death accomplished in our association with the Lord Jesus Christ. The arguments that will now be set before us are unusually powerful. Evidence will be presented that is common to every person in Christ.

DO YOU NOT KNOW?

The interrogation “*Do you not know?*” is rhetorical, but not only rhetorical. It is like saying, “Are you really ignorant of what has happened to you?” or, “Don’t you realize what has really taken place?” The Spirit uses this form of

teaching again in verse sixteen. It is again used in chapter seven (7:1). Frequently the Spirit asks “do you not know?” i.e., in First Corinthians (3:16; 5:6; 6:3,9,15,16,19,24). This is a way of introducing something that can and should be known. It is obvious to faith, but is obscured when men walk in the flesh.

AS MANY OF US

This introduces a common experience—something that occurs to everyone involved in the ordinance that is mentioned. What follows happens to everyone participating in the activity that is specified. It should also be observed that few, if any, were aware of this reality to easy measurable degree.

The Purpose of this Teaching

Let it be clear, this is not a diversion from the Spirit’s teaching on justification. It is not the development of a new subject. The sixth chapter of Romans puts a handle on the truth of justification and imputed righteousness. For this reason, an event will be expounded that is both common and perceptible. The Spirit will not refer to an emotion, or a spiritual occurrence that is difficult to identify. To proceed in such a manner would only obscure the truth that is being declared.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS

“ . . . as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” As soon as the word “baptized” is mentioned, a host of speculative arguments are introduced by those in the grip of sectarianism. There are religious ranks in which baptism is not common. Their theology is challenged by this forthright statement, and thus they seek to neutralize what is said with fanciful explanations.

Some say it is a spiritual baptism that is placed before us—one that cannot be seen or sensed in any way. It can only be identified by understanding, and cannot be associated with a point in time. It is, they say, a general statement like “we, being many, are one body in Christ” (Rom 12:5).

Others say this refers to a baptism in the Spirit. It may be associated with some physical phenomena, depending on the teaching embraced, but is basically an

unseen happening.

These views, and others related to them, rob the text of its power. They throw the truth declared into a dark and mystical pit in which the precious and needed truth required cannot be easily seen. If the event of reference—“baptism”—is not readily apparent, it will not be able to convey the confidence intended.

Baptism

To assist us in our understanding of this most controversial subject, the Spirit reveals there is only “one baptism” (Eph 4:5). The word “baptism” (the noun form) is used twenty-two times in Scripture. Three different occasions are referenced by this word.

- βάπτισμα** – The “baptism” of John the Baptist (Matt 3:7; 21:25; Mk 1:4; 11:30; Lk 3:3; 7:29; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3,4; **βαπτισματος** Acts 1:22)
- βάπτισμα** – Also used for being overwhelmed with suffering, or suffering unto death. Christ referred to this as His own baptism (Matt 20:22-23; Mk 10:38-39; Lk 12:50).
- βάπτισμα** – Also used of the baptism that is common to all believers (Eph 4:5; 1 Pet 3:21; **βαπτισματος** Rom 6:4; **βαπτισματι** Col 2:12).

In its noun form, “baptism” is never referred to being baptized “with the Holy Spirit” – never. The phrase “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” or “the baptism of the

references: John and repentance, the latter being another view of John’s baptism.

There should, then, be no controversy over the baptism common to believers! Christ’s baptism of suffering unto death is certainly not common to all believers, nor is martyrdom, which is a similar baptism (1 Cor 15:29). John’s baptism was obviated with the enthronement of Jesus, as it was instituted in anticipation of Christ (Acts 19:4), and was not accompanied with the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

A Common Baptism

This is the baptism that is common throughout the book of Acts, and pertains to all who have obeyed the Gospel (Acts 2:38,41; Acts 8:12,13,16,36,38; 9:18; 10:47,48; 16:15,33; 18:8; Acts 19:5; 22:16). It should be obvious to all that this involved a bodily action in which the individual being baptized took a certain initiative.

- Those who “gladly received the Word were baptized” (Acts 2:41).
- Both “men and women were baptized” (Acts 8:12).
- The Ethiopian eunuch wanted to be, and was, baptized in water (Acts 8:36,38).
- Saul of Tarsus “arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:18; 22:16).
- Peter asked who could forbid water that Cornelius and his house could be baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

As soon as the word “baptized” is mentioned, a host of speculative arguments are introduced by those in the grip of sectarianism. There are religious ranks in which baptism is not common. Their theology is challenged by this forthright statement, and thus they seek to neutralize what is said with fanciful explanations.

Holy Ghost” is not found a single time in any version of Scripture. In fact the words “the baptism of” are **ONLY** used in this way by the Spirit: “the baptism of John” (Matt 21:25; Mk 11:30; Lk 7:29; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 18:25), and “the baptism of repentance” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4). Every version of Scripture limits the words “baptism of” to these two

- The Philippian jailor was baptized “the same hour of the night” (Acts 16:33).
- The Ephesians were rebaptized in the same outward manner as John baptized, but for a different reason (Acts 19:4-5).
- Peter associates baptism with water, declaring by the Spirit that it “now

saves us" (1 Pet 3:21).

Those insisting that the baptism of Romans six is a spiritual baptism, or that it has nothing whatsoever to do with being baptized in "water," are simply wrong. There is only "one baptism," and it is common to all who are in Christ. The accounts of actual baptisms in Scripture leave no question about the action involved.

"Baptized Into Christ"

Baptism, however, involves more than an external activity. Both "water" and "Spirit" are involved in the new birth (John 3:5-8). There is an action that takes place within as well as without. In fact, it is the inward action that validates the outward one. Also, it occurs simultaneously with the outward action. The two are not to be divorced.

Think of the magnitude of the words "baptized INTO Jesus Christ." This phrase is also used in Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." At the point of our baptism, we actually become one with the Lord Jesus. We are "joined" to Him, becoming "one spirit" with Him (1 Cor 6:17).

This is the unity for which Jesus

The Spirit is strengthening our faith and revealing the implications of our justification. When a person is "made the righteousness" of God (2 Cor 5:21), there is no place for sin. Lest the believer be discouraged with the thought that he is a helpless vassal of sin, the Spirit will now show us that we have been linked up with Jesus, and consequently with omnipotence. He will not relate that vital association with a mystical experience that is unsure and difficult to identify. Rather, the Spirit will point to our baptism, declaring with power what actually occurred to us at that time.

BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH

"... as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death?**" In the New Covenant, **the believer actually participates in the Gospel.**

Not only did Jesus die for us, we died with Him! Keep in mind that the Spirit is here expounding our death TO sin: "How shall we, that **are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**" (Verse 2). This is not a theoretical death to sin, but a very real one. In participating in Christ's death, we cease to participate in sin, for Christ has nothing to do with sin.

It is true that sins are "washed

the powerful effects and benefits of Christ's death now belong to us! Ponder the revealed associations of the death of Jesus Christ.

- He gave His life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28).
- His blood was "shed for the remission of sins" (Matt 26:28).
- In His death, as the Lamb of God, He took away "the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
- He gave His "flesh" for "the life of the world" (John 6:51).
- He laid down His life for the protection of the "sheep" (John 10:11-17).
- He died that He might gather into one the scattered people of God (John 11:51-52).
- He died that He Himself might bring forth much fruit (John 12:23-24).
- When He died, the "prince of this world was cast out" (John 12:31).
- In His death, a means was provided through which He would draw all men to Himself (John 12:32-33).
- Through His death Jesus purchased "the church of God" (Acts 20:28).
- In His death is justification, redemption, and remission of sin through God's righteousness (Rom 3:24-25).
- We were reconciled to God by the death of Jesus (Rom 5:10).
- In Christ's death, God "condemned sin" in the flesh of His son (Rom 8:3).
- Jesus died that He might be Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14:9).
- Through Christ's death, our bodies and spirits were purchased (1 Cor 6:19-20).
- Jesus died that we might live to God, and no longer for ourselves (2 Cor 5:15).
- In dying, Jesus was made to be sin for us that we might be made "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21).
- He died that we "through His poverty might be made rich" (2 Cor 8:9).
- In His death, Jesus delivered us "from this present evil world" (Gal 1:4).
- In dying, Jesus delivered us "from the curse of the Law" (Gal 3:13).
- Jesus died to redeem us, that we might receive "the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:5).
- We have been made nigh to God through Christ's blood (Eph 2:13).

We are baptized "into" the death of Christ. This means that all of the powerful effects and benefits of Christ's death now belong to us! Ponder the revealed associations of the death of Jesus Christ.

prayed on the even of His betrayal. "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are **in Me, and I in You;** that they also may be one **in Us**" (John 17:21). It speaks of accord, harmony, and spiritual oneness. Christ, therefore, is "in" the believer (Col 1:27), and the believer is "in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17).

The Point Being Made

This text is not an argument for the validity of baptism. The validity and necessity of baptism does not need to be proved. It is affirmed to be a commandment (Acts 10:48; 22:16), and is now associated with being in Christ.

away" when we are baptized. But that is certainly not the whole of the matter. We are also baptized INTO Christ's death—which is WHY our sins are washed away. When young, I heard many a person attempt to show the necessity of baptism by saying we contacted the blood of Christ in baptism, and it alone could wash away sin. The argument had an element of truth in it, yet was not found in Scripture. It was a feeble attempt on the part of man to justify the need to be baptized.

Our text speaks much more strongly on the matter! We are baptized "into" the death of Christ. **This means that all of**

- ❑ On the cross Jesus put to death the enmity between Jew and Gentile, making us one new man before God (Eph 2:14-15).
- ❑ Jesus gave Himself for the church in order that He might present it to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:25-27).
- ❑ He "made peace" through the blood of His cross (Col 1:20).
- ❑ In His death, He "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col 2:14).
- ❑ In His death Jesus "spoiled," or plundered, principalities and powers, making a triumphant public display of them in His cross (Col 2:15).
- ❑ Jesus died that we might "live together with Him" (1 Thess 5:10).
- ❑ He died to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit 2:14).
- ❑ Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Heb 2:9).
- ❑ Through His death, He destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14).
- ❑ By means of His death, Jesus delivered "them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2:15).
- ❑ Jesus obtained "eternal redemption" for us through his death (Heb 9:12).
- ❑ In the New Covenant, and because of Christ's death, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10).
- ❑ In the offering of Himself in death, Jesus has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14).
- ❑ Through Jesus' death, you have been

redeemed "from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

- ❑ Jesus died that he might "bring us to God" (1 Pet 3:18).
- ❑ Through His death, Jesus "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev 1:5-6).

This is by no means an exhaustive list. It does, however, confirm the magnitude of the benefits that flow from the death of Jesus Christ. His was not a

that receiving the gift of righteousness is, in fact, God's answer to the sin problem. The power of sin is diffused in Christ, and we are no longer obligated to obey it.

All of this remarkable benefit is associated with our baptism! The fact that people argue about the necessity and validity of baptism only confirms their ignorance and blindness to the truth of the Gospel. For those, however, who believe, great consolation will be

Let no person question whether or not they should be baptized, or whether or not any blessing is associated with it! As for those who say baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation, their own speech betrays them. They have denied the truth of this text, which says baptism is "into" Christ's death.

simplistic death, and the fruit that comes from it is not small or undistinguished.

When the Spirit says we have been "baptized into His death," a truth of unspeakable magnitude has been affirmed. **This means all of the benefits resident in that death become ours!** What God has declared flows from that death, flows to those who are baptized into it!

There is no way to justify continued sin when we are baptized into Christ's death! There is no place for sin in His death, and no reason why it should dominate us. That is the point of this passage. **The Holy Spirit is showing us**

experienced, and confidence to resist the devil received. What a great God, who can pack such a vast body of truth into a single seemingly insignificant act.

Let no person question whether or not they should be baptized, or whether or not any blessing is associated with it! As for those who say baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation, their own speech betrays them. They have denied the truth of this text, which says baptism is "into" Christ's death. Who is the fool who would say Christ's death has nothing to do with salvation? That is what the opponents of baptism have really said, and it is inexcusable! Actually, to oppose baptism is to oppose Jesus.

BURIED AND RAISED WITH CHRIST

"⁴ 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." The text is based upon the foundation of the previous statement: "as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were

baptized into His death."

The teaching of verse four cannot be true if the reality of verse three has not been experienced. The Spirit will now elaborate upon that death. He will show us that just as a resurrection followed Christ's death, so a resurrection follows our identity with that vicarious death.

BURIED WITH HIM

The burial of Christ is an essential part of the Gospel. "The Gospel . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that **He was buried** . . ." (1 Cor 15:1-3). In order, therefore, to be saved, we must not only be joined to Jesus in His death, but in His burial as well. We must participate with Him there.

Notice precisely how we are “buried with Him.” It is “through baptism.” Other versions say “by baptism.” The New Jerusalem Bible reads, “by our baptism.” The baptism of reference is the one that is “into His death.” It occurred when we, like Saul of Tarsus, “arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:18). It occurred when you, like those on the day of Pentecost, “gladly received the Word” and “were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

Buried Into Death

In nature, first men die, then they are buried. In the Spirit, however, we are “buried . . . into death.” Nearly every translation says the same thing of this burial with Jesus. It is “into death.” The ASV and Darbys reads “unto death.” The BBE reads, “We have been placed with Him among the dead.” The NJB reads “by our baptism into His death we were buried with him.”

The teaching is that in our baptism we entered into the domain of death to sin, for that is what is being expounded: “How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (V 2). We entered into a realm where sin is neither allowed nor encouraged. Sin cannot survive in this spiritual province. From the standpoint of a Person, this domain is Jesus Christ. From the view of an expanse, it is the “heavenly places.” Here sin is out of place. Nothing about Christ or the heavenly places will lead a person to believe it is all right to sin. No person in fellowship with Christ will ever conclude there are advantages to be had in sin. No individual dwelling in heavenly places will be attracted to sin. Here is where men die TO sin! It is where they lose their appetite for it, and sin becomes repulsive to them.

Valid Form Must Agree with the True Doctrine

Endless Arguments

Men have longed argued about “the form” of baptism. Some choose to sprinkle water upon the candidate, calling that baptism. Others pour a modest amount of water upon the head of the person, calling that baptism. Some merely dip their finger in some water and smear it upon the head of the individual, calling that baptism. As you may suspect, fanciful

arguments are advanced to justify these practices. They range from claiming personal preference to saying mere convenience is sought.

Sprinkling

Some have justified sprinkling as a form of baptism by pointing to the prophecy of Ezekiel. Referring to the era of salvation Ezekiel prophecies, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness” (Ezek 36:25). That, however, is something God said **He** would do, not something men would do. Further, it spoke of sanctification, or setting apart, and not of an outward form. The New Covenant equivalent of this sprinkling is

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the purging of the conscience from dead works in order that we might serve God (Heb 9:13-14; 1 Pet 1:2).

Pouring

Those who seek to justify pouring as the form of baptism point to the manner in which God Himself baptized. On the day of Pentecost, the promise of Jesus was realized: “but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). We know this is the case, because Peter alludes to that experience as specifically fulfilling Jesus’ word (Acts 11:15-16).

When Peter explained that experience, he referred to the prophecy of Joel. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, **I will pour out** of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and on my

servants and on my handmaidens **I will pour out** in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18). Thus, the proponents of pouring say, “If pouring was good enough for God, it is good enough for us.”

The idea of “pouring,” however is associated with unimaginable abundance—not water trickling from a small vessel. When God “poured out” His Spirit, men were inundated with it. They were engulfed with His Spirit, just as surely as if they had been plunged into a vast ocean.

It would, indeed, be valid to baptize someone by pouring water upon them. It would, however, require a vast amount—something like pouring a ton of dirt upon a casket that had been placed in the earth.

Immersion

Others, myself included, contend that immersion, or being plunged beneath the water, is the manner in which we are buried with Christ “through baptism.” From the standpoint of etymology, or language, this is beyond all controversy. The word used in our text (“baptism”), comes from the Greek word βαπτίζω, which means “to dip repeatedly, immerse, submerge.” It also has a secondary etymological meaning, “to cleanse by dipping, or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water.”^{Thayer’s Greek Lexicon}

This is the word used in Luke sixteen, when Jesus said the rich man in hell asked Abraham to have Lazarus “DIP” the tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue (Lk 16:24).

Notice, the technical meaning of the word “baptize” includes at least three things. (1) Submerging, (2) Cleansing, and (3) The use of water (“with water”). How marvelously this accords with the words of Scripture! A burial, or submerging, and a cleansing associated with water.

The Strength of Doctrine

Even though these arguments, taken from language, are most impressive, they do not carry the weight of Scripture. In my judgment, they should not be used to convince men of the form of baptism,

for they are not *“the sword of the Spirit”* (Eph 6:17). The doctrine, or teaching, concerning baptism will convince the believer of the only acceptable manner in which baptism is to be carried out.

First, there really are no “forms” of baptism. Baptism is itself the form. Later, in this very chapter, it is referred to as *“the form of the doctrine”* (6:17). Though seemingly simplistic, this wording is critical to our understanding of baptism. The *“form”* is of the doctrine, not the act. This means that in baptism there is a precise likeness to the thing into which we are baptized. In this case, it is Christ’s death. Because baptism is a *“burial,”* it perfectly depicts that action in an external manner. If the means by which baptism is accomplished are at variance with the truth it affirms, the action becomes meaningless.

Jesus was *“buried”* in a tomb (John 19:40-42). His entire body was placed into it. His head or His feet were not hanging out of it. He was not in the tomb figuratively, but bodily. Others buried His body, He did not bury it Himself.

Thus we are *“buried”* in water, being placed in it, and covered by it (Acts 8:38). The action perfectly correlates with the *“burial”* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as surely as Christ was really *“buried,”* so we were really *“buried with Christ.”* In the body, someone else baptized us, like Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:35-39). Our burial *“with Christ,”* however, was accomplished by the Lord through the Holy Spirit. In our identity with Christ, we also became identified with the body of Christ. As it is written, *“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink”* (1 Cor 12:13).

JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED

At this point we rise above petty arguments into the domain of sound doctrine. It is not enough that we died to sin, or that we died with Christ, or that we were buried with Christ. We will find that the point of our baptism was not

going down but coming up. It is life, not death, that is the ultimate point.

Death First, Then Life

In nature, life precedes death. In the Spirit, it comes after death! In the beginning, first there was darkness, then there was light (Gen 1:2-3). First there was Cain, then there was Abel (Gen 4:1-2). Esau was born first, then Jacob (Gen 25:25-26). In the realm of the Spirit, the

In regeneration, death not only occurs first, it is in order to the experience of life. There must FIRST be a death to sin before there can ever be life toward God. Many a poor soul is not sensitive toward God simply because they continue to nurture their appetite for sin.

worst is first and the best last. As *“the Second Man,”* Jesus is the best man (1 Cor 15:47).

One further thing is seen in this pregnant text. In regeneration, death not only occurs first, it is in order to the experience of life. There must FIRST be a death to sin before there can ever be life toward God. Many a poor soul is not sensitive toward God simply because they continue to nurture their appetite for sin.

By the Glory of the Father

In our baptism we are raised just like Jesus was – *“by the glory of the Father.”* Bodily, John the Baptist raised Jesus out of the water. Philip raised the eunuch out of the water. But in our baptism, *“the glory of the Father”* raises us from death TO sin. That is, God was personally involved in our baptism. His Person, purpose, and power were there! Therein we became His *“workmanship”* (Eph 2:10).

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead raised us, who were dead in trespasses and sin – from death to sin (Eph 1:20-2:1).

An Important Distinction

It is true that prior to coming into Christ, we were *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1). **But that is not the death which required our burial!** The point being expounded by the Spirit is that we have become ***“DEAD TO SIN,”*** not that we were *“dead in sins.”* Our burial with Christ constituted the beginning of our departure from a life of sin. Not only were our sins washed away, our servitude to sin was terminated!

In baptism, our resurrection was in order to a new life. We embraced new loves, new hates, new purposes, and new desires. We began a new life, which is the point of the text.

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

The only reason we have died **to** sin is in order that we might live unto God! If there is no *“newness of life,”* there really is no point to being *“buried with Christ.”* The burial and the resurrection are in order to *“walk in newness of life.”* Most versions read the same. The NIV reads, *“live a new life.”* Others read *“might be living a new life,”*^{BBE} *“begin living a new life.”*^{NJB} These translations are an accommodation to a shallow thinking generation for which words have little meaning.

“Walking”

“Walk in newness of life” is a very descriptive expression. The word “walk” comes from a word meaning *“spending some time in a place, walking around.”* In this text, the secondary meaning of the word is employed: *“How one conducts his daily life; behave, live, , or the manner or kind of life that is lived.”* There is also the idea of *“progress, and taking advantage of the opportunities.”*^{Strong’s, Thayer} A strong word, indeed! We can expect a great deal of liberating truth to be found here.

Walking in the newness of life involves occupying the heavenly places into which we have been placed (Eph 2:6), and where all of the spiritual blessings are realized (Eph 1:3). It consists of living in view of these spiritual blessings, and so conducting our lives as to never be beyond their reach. There is progress in walking

in "newness of life," as we are "changed from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of our God" (2 Cor 3:18).

By saying that, like Jesus, we are raised "by the glory of the Father" in order to walk in "newness of life," the Spirit means we are empowered by God to do so. Not only is this the Divine objective, we are marvelously enabled to do precisely that—"walk in newness of life." Where such a life is not being lived, "the power thereof" is either not known, or it is being denied (2 Tim 3:5). In the case of the former, where the power is not

comprehended, our teaching and prayers must be devoted to the eyes of their understanding being opened so they will know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph 1:19).

As we will see, baptism is not an empty and powerless symbol! It is not a lifeless liturgy! Further, it is not a subject about which men are to speculate or argue. God has spoken on this subject, and we are obliged to believe what He has affirmed.

One Further Thing

I have long observed the miserable failure of those who constantly preach baptism, to project the newness of life into which baptism inducts us. Those who aggressively affirm the necessity and benefits of baptism must be exhibits of its effectiveness and power. Where these exhibitions are not found, it would be best to allow others who are more familiar with "the newness of life" to declare the revealed role of baptism in the Divine economy. The reason for this should be obvious. **The doctrine is weakened by a deficient walk.**

UNITED WITH CHRIST IN DEATH AND RESURRECTION

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

The Spirit will now embark on a most powerful form of spiritual reasoning. Not only does death to sin precede being raised to walk in a new life, **those who die to sin WILL be raised to walk in newness of life.** Just as surely as death follows life in the natural realm, life follows death in the spiritual realm! The only real question is whether or not we have been united with Jesus in His death. If we have, we will also be joined to Him in His resurrection.

UNITED TOGETHER

Prior to this, the Spirit said we were "baptized into Jesus Christ," "baptized into His death," and "buried with Him by baptism into death." The point is that a very real union between Christ and the believer is formed in our baptism. We may not have been fully aware of it, but it happened. We may not have been able to articulate it, or speak with confidence about it, but it happened. Even if we were handicapped by weak and beggarly doctrines taught to us, if we were united with Jesus in the "likeness of His death," we were just that certainly united with Him in the "likeness of His resurrection." There is a real and effective oneness with Jesus that is accomplished in baptism.

"PLANTED"

Again emphasizing the "form of the

doctrine," the Spirit refers to our baptism as being "planted together" with Christ. The word "planted" means "planted together, grown together, united with, and closely identified with."^{Strong's}

The point is that a very real union between Christ and the believer is formed in our baptism. We may not have been fully aware of it, but it happened. We may not have been able to articulate it, or speak with confidence about it, but it happened.

Ungodly people are referred to as plants the Father "has **not** planted" (Matt 15:13). In the sense of our text, we were "planted" in expectation of the fruit that would follow - like the planting of a vineyard (Matt 21:33; Mk 12:1; Lk 13:6). Planting is much like burial. What is planted is placed beneath the ground. But here an additional aspect of our baptism is unveiled. Our burial has been like placing a seed in the ground from which new things will come.

In a strict etymological sense, the word "planted" can mean engrafted, or becoming a part of. Looking at our

baptism from this perspective, we come into a union with Christ's death whereby its benefits pass to us, like the life of the tree passes into the branch that has been engrafted into it.

THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH

Why does the Spirit say the required death is a "likeness?" The word "likeness" comes from a specific term meaning "that which is made after the likeness of something." It also means "an outward resemblance."

This word is used five times (including our text) in the New Covenant writings, and enforces the intention of this text. (1) Gentile idolaters changed the glory of God "into an image made like unto man," birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things (Rom 1:23). (2) Romans 5:14 reminds us that those between Adam and Moses died, even though they had not sinned "**after the similitude of Adam's transgression.**" (3) Jesus is said to have been sent into the world "**in the likeness of sinful flesh**" (Rom 8:3). (4) He is also said to have taken upon Himself "**the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men**" (Phil 2:7).

Christ's death is the preeminent death. The death in our text has validity only because we are joined to Him. Our death has no efficacy of its own. Christ's death is powerful, ours is only in the likeness of His death.

The Tone of the Text

The tone of the text is undeniable. In nature, there is a finality to death that is morose. But here, death leads to life. Death is not the end of the matter, but rather is its beginning. By using the expression “*planted together in the likeness of His death*,” the Spirit is saying a resurrection is expected, and will come.

CERTAINLY WE SHALL BE

“... certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” Other versions read, “we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection,^{⁠KJV} “we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”^{⁠NIV} This is something that is sure and unwavering. **It is not possible for those united with Jesus in His death to come short of being united with Him in His resurrection life.**

Again, our resurrection is a “*likeness*,” deriving all of its power from Christ’s resurrection. **Apart from**

Christ’s resurrection life, we are confined to the old life. Thus, our baptism becomes effective because Jesus is risen from the dead. This is precisely what First Peter 3:21 states. “... in the days of Noah, during the construction of

teaching is rarely heard in the Christian world. Even though it is given to assure the hearts of “*God’s elect*” (Rom 8:33), it has been withheld in preference of teaching that promotes sectarianism, personal careers, and institutionalism.

It is not possible for those united with Jesus in His death to come short of being united with Him in His resurrection life.

the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.^{⁠NASB}

CONCLUSION

As you can see, the teaching of the Spirit in this section is very powerful. It is an exposition of what occurred when our sins were remitted and we were given “*the gift or righteousness*” (Rom 5:17). It should also be apparent to you that this

What little is being said about baptism these days generally serves to only obscure what this passage teaches. God’s people are suffering at the hand of preachers and self-acclaimed teachers. Many choose to ignore the subject altogether, while others argue against baptism, relegating it to the class of “*works*,” whereby men cannot be saved. In all of this nonsense, the people of God have suffered hurt. They have been deprived of a spiritual touchstone from which remarkable confidence can come.

THE OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED

“⁶ **Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**”

Here is something that is intended to be **known**, or comprehended with understanding. This is not a dead tenet of some creed, but a life-sustaining statement of reality. Already, the remarkable power of spiritual knowledge has been emphasized.

- ❑ We know the Law speaks to those under it, to stop the mouths of all men and render them guilty before God (3:19).
- ❑ We know that tribulation results in endurance, or spiritual stamina (5:3).
- ❑ We know that endurance results in experience, or proven character (5:4a).
- ❑ We know that proven character results in a confident hope (5:4b).
- ❑ We know that all who have been baptized were put into Christ’s death (6:3).

We are not, then, dealing with religious speculations or opinions. This is

experiential knowledge—knowledge that is acquired in our participation with Christ. What will now be declared by the Spirit is already known intuitively by the one united with Christ. It is not enough, however, to sense these things. They must be comprehended or Satan will gain the advantage over us through his subtleties and delusions

OUR OLD MAN

“... **our old man was crucified with Him.**” Our death to sin will now be explained in a most vivid way. This passage will also prepare us for the teaching of the following chapter, which expounds more fully on the nature and presence of OUR “*old man*.”

What Is OUR “Old Man?”

First, it is something that belongs to us—“*OUR old man*.” Other versions translate it “*our old self*,”^{⁠NASB,NIV,NRSV} “*our old sinful selves*,”^{⁠NLT} and “*our former self*.”^{⁠NJB} The Amplified Bible reads “*our old (unrenewed) self*.” These later versions are actually more of a commentary than they are translations. I have observed that those with a penchant for precise translations rarely, if ever, deal

with passages like this.

For those who are interested, the Greek words employed here are *παλαιός ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος*. They are all simplistic and uncomplicated words. Translated literally, and in the sequence written, they are “*old and worn out, our man*.” The word translated “*old*” means “*opposed to what is new, antiquated, worn out, obsolete, and an old part*.” The word translated “*man*” is transliterated (letter for letter) “*anthropos*,” and means “*a human being, man, or person*.”

There is, then, a part of us that is not changed in regeneration—“*our old man*.” He is not rendered extinct, but must be “*crucified*,” or pinioned upon the cross with Jesus, until he finally expires. Theologically, this is called “*the sinful nature*,” although that is too impersonal, as though we were dealing with a sort of force that lacks personality.

“*The old man*” is “*the flesh*” of Romans seven and eight. It is “*the natural man*” of First Corinthians 2:14, and “*the flesh*” of Galatians 5:17. This is the part of us coming from Adam, whose image we

have surely born (1 Cor 15:45-49).

Even though we died and been buried with Christ, there remains a part of us that must be subdued in the power of the resurrection. This is *“the old man”* that is to be *“put off”* in preference for putting on *“the new man”* (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10). This is the part of us that sins, and is only capable of sinning.

When we begin our life in Jesus, *“our old man”* is crucified for us. He is put upon a place of confinement and restraint, so that he cannot exercise control over us. Like the impenitent thief, he cries out to be released. *“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save Thyself **and us**”* (Lk 23:39).

The essential thing to learn in this passage is that this part of our nature is restrained by the cross. But we must know this in order to gain the victory. If we are joined to Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, the unregenerate part of us has been *“crucified with Him.”* This parallels *“dead to sin”* (6:2).

THE BODY OF SIN

“ . . . that the body of sin might be done away.” The reason for crucifixion of the old man is precise and large. It is in order that *“the body of sin might be done away,”* or *“destroyed.”*^{KJV} Most translations, with very few exceptions, read *“the body of sin.”* Some, tainted by the limitations of their translators, read, *“sinful body,”*^{RSV} *“that sin may lose its power in our lives,”*^{NLT} and *“the old self which belonged to sin.”*^{NJB}

This is not our flesh and blood bodies, although they are certainly *“vile”* (Phil 3:20). This is the mass of sin, the totality of what we are apart from Christ. It is another way of saying *“You must be born again”* (John 3:7). Not only must the new come to us, the old must go. That *“going”* process begins when we are baptized into Christ and the *“old man”* is

crucified. Then, he begins to die. Because this *“old man”* is tied to our bodies, and remains as long as they do, his presence cannot be eliminated until they have been separated from us in death.

“The body of sin” is also mentioned in the second chapter of Colossians. There its destruction is also related to our baptism. *“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body*

death apart from the cross of Christ. He cannot be *“destroyed”* by disciplines and procedures contrived by men (Col 2:19-23). This is a critical aspect of redemptive truth that is scarcely mentioned in our time. I should not be surprised if myriad of believers, in fact, have never so much as heard the truth shouted out in this text.

NO LONGER SLAVES

“ . . . that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” If the *“old man”* is

Every advantage is given to us when we become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Our sins are remitted. Our conscience is purged. We are reconciled to God. We are given the Holy Spirit. We have peace with God. We are granted access into the grace of God, wherein we stand. Our old man is crucified.

of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 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” NKJV (2:11-12). In this text, the removal of the mass of sin is related to the *“circumcision of Christ”* rather than to His cross. The cross is WHERE the *“old man”* is dealt with. *“Circumcision”* is HOW Jesus separates the *“old man”* from our essential person. He cuts the *“flesh,”* or *“old man,”* away from us. While it resides with us, living, as it were, in our house of clay, it is really not a part of us. In Christ we are a complex, and oft confusing, dichotomy—an *“old man”* and a *“new man”* dwelling in a frail tent.

The *“old man”* cannot be made good, nor can he be reformed. His destiny is *“destruction.”* Thus he is *“crucified”* in order to end his ruthless rule. Our text will affirm precisely WHY this action was taken. Beginning with regeneration, the *“old man”* dies by degrees, just as we are changed from *“glory to glory”* by degrees (2 Cor 3:18).

An important thing must be seen here. The *“old man”* cannot be put to

not crucified, we will not cease to serve sin. Everyone begins new life in Christ with the crucifixion of the *“old man.”* That is standard procedure.

Every advantage is given to us when we become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Our sins are remitted. Our conscience is purged. We are reconciled to God. We are given the Holy Spirit. We have peace with God. We are granted access into the grace of God, wherein we stand. Our old man is crucified. In view of that, and much more, it ought to be apparent that we *“should no longer be the slaves of sin.”*

It goes without saying that as long as men are not joined to Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, sin has dominion over them, and they are slaves to it. *“No longer”* means we were slaves of sin until we were joined to Christ.

Once again, you can see that sin has no place in Christ. Provision has been made for the remission of sin, but none has been made for continuance in it. A propitiation has been supplied for sin, but no allowance it made for it to remain. Life must be toward God, or it will not remain. Apart from God, we cannot survive.

DEAD AND FREED FROM SIN

*“**For he who has died has been freed from sin.**”* Here is the genius of

the New Covenant. Sin is overcome by death. Sin, like the Law, which is its

“strength” (1 Cor 15:56) can only dominate a person who is alive to it. This

is not a death that can be effected by men. We are *“buried with Him by baptism INTO death.”* We actually participate in Christ’s death. Not only did He die vicariously in our place, we also died with Him. As it is written, *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”* (Col 3:3). The words *“are dead”* equate to those of our text, *“has died.”* It is an action that has already taken place. The passage with which we are dealing traces your death back to your baptism, when you died with Christ, were buried with Him, and raised with Him.

To be *“freed from sin”* does not

mean the believer no longer has to grapple or struggle with it. It does not mean he will never again have to acknowledge sin, or that he no longer requires an Advocate before the Father. Rather, it means that in Christ we are free from the **dominion** of sin and from **servitude** to it.

The word translated *“freed”* is **δικαιώται**, and is the word elsewhere translated *“justified.”* The idea here is that we are free from the guilt and power of sin—*“justified from all things”* (Acts 13:39). Our baptism into Christ’s death resulted in our procurement of the forgiveness that was based upon that

death. This *“freed from sin”* speaks of a release from the guilt of sin and from its domination. **It follows, therefore, that until remission is experienced, sin will dominate over us.**

Once more, it is our identity with Christ’s death that brings death to sin. That death involves complete justification from every infraction of the law. It also includes the imputation of the righteousness of God. It is not possible for sin to dominate the individual that lives with an acute awareness of these two realities. That awareness, brought by faith, diffuses the power of sin.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

“^s Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” If you were to ask the average Christian today what they

approached that way in Scripture. *“Believing”* speaks of what we have embraced—things on which we are depending. Chiefly *“believing”* centers in

When men do not live for Christ, it is because they have not died to sin. If they have not died to sin, it is because they are not been united with Christ in His death, and not risen to walk in newness of life.

If you have been in Christ for any length of time, you know how exceedingly rare this kind of life is. It should be a great concern to us when the principle aspect of spiritual life is rare among professed believers. I have even witnessed its rarity among religious leaders—preachers and teachers. It is time for God’s people to insist those who teach and preach declare the truth of the Gospel.

When men do not live for Christ, it is because they have not died to sin. If they have not died to sin, it is because they are not been united with Christ in His death, and not risen to walk in newness of life. We know this is the case because of the certainty of our text. *“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”^{NASB}* We believe that because it is the truth. Faith does not doubt this affirmation, but takes it for granted, knowing that what God has promised, He is *“able to perform”* (4:21).

While we will surely be gathered to the Lord and be forever with Him, that is not the life of reference. This text refers to living now—being sensitive to the Lord, and in active fellowship with Him. Spiritual life is to be expected! Walking in the light is not the exception, but the rule. We believe and delight in this reality.

believe, you would be faced with a host of contradicting answers. Very few would probably answer in the manner *described in Scripture.* *“But WE BELIEVE that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they”* (Acts 15:11). *“Now if we be dead with Christ, WE BELIEVE that we shall also live with Him”* (Rom 6:8). *“For if WE BELIEVE that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him”* (1 Thess 4:14). *“And he answered and said, I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”* (Acts 8:37).

Notice the absence of a creedal emphasis, or the citation of a prepared list of theological tenets. Although that approach is quite common, believing is not

Christ Jesus and what He has done.

“IF we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” The life of reference is the *“newness of life”* in which we walk following our baptism. This is not a new **way** of life, or a new **discipline** of life. It is not living according to a new set of rules, or adhering to a new set of doctrines. As valuable as all of those things may appear to be, they are totally lacking of spiritual power. Living with Christ is being in His *“yoke”* (Matt 11:29-30), walking in fellowship with Him (1 Cor 1:9), and remaining seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph 2:6). If we have really *“died with Christ,”* this is exactly what we will do. There is no way to be united with Christ in His death and not come alive.

DEATH IS ONCE

“⁴⁶ Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion

over Him. ¹⁰ **For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.** Christ's death stands for all valid death – it was “once.” the Scriptures make a point of the singularity of Christ's death.

- “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did **ONCE**, when He offered up himself” (Heb 7:27).
- “But now **ONCE** in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was **ONCE** offered to bear the sins of many . . . ” (Heb 9:26-28).
- “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **ONCE** for all” (Heb 10:10).

HAVING BEEN RAISED

Although death is powerful, it is no match for resurrection life! Christ's resurrection vaulted Him beyond the reach of death. Having conquered the domain and prince of death, death was rendered impotent against the Lord's Christ.

The telling point being driven home by the Holy Spirit is that when we were raised up with Christ, we were moved into a realm that is superior to death. He will prove His point by showing us the effect of Christ's resurrection.

DIES NO MORE

The NIV reads, “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He **cannot die again.**” Notice, this is something that “we know,” and that knowledge is most powerful.

There is a Kingdom principle to be seen here. Deliverance renders impotent the one or thing which held us captive. This is confirmed in Christ Jesus. He did descend *into* “the deep” once (Rom 10:7). However, having risen from that low place, he will never again descend into it—for any reason!

These words are particularly relevant for us, since we have died with Jesus, been buried with Him, and have been raised with Him.

DEATH NO LONGER HAS DOMINION OVER HIM

The dominion death had over Jesus differs significantly from the dominion it had over us. It only dominated Jesus because He bore our sins in His body, and it only did that for only three days. Ultimately, it was not possible for the Son of God to be held in the grip of death (Acts 2:24). Even then, our Lord submitted to death. It did not take Him captive.

The poignant point being made is that resurrection is the ultimate triumph. It was so with Jesus, and it is so with those who have been joined to Him.

In view of this, our baptism has implications for the future, as well as for our past. In it, we were loosed from the power of Satan and cleansed from the defilement of sin. But that means we are no longer servants of sin. It means sin has no more power over us. As we will find in the exhortation following verse ten, that victory actually depends upon whether or not we grasp this truth by faith.

HE DIED TO SIN

Jesus did not “die to sin” in the sense of ceasing to commit it. Emphatically, He was “without sin,” though “tempted in all points “as we are” (Heb 4:15).

When God the Father “laid” upon Jesus “the iniquities of us all” (Isa 53:6), the transaction was very real. These sins were felt by Jesus as He bore them. In fact, He shuddered at the thought, and sought to have the bitter cup taken from Him (Matt 26:39-44). In bearing the sins of the world, He became personally responsible for them.

In some sense, the defilement of them was felt by Him, and unspeakable suffering resulted. The soul of Jesus had

never been touched with the contamination of sin. He had never felt the pangs of regret that accompany transgression. Nor, indeed, had He ever sought forgiveness or experienced alienation from God. But when He bore the sins of the world in His body on the tree, He entered into the most bitter experience of His life. No one will ever fully know the involvements of that death, and what it took to rescue fallen humanity.

Under the administration of the Law, many spotless and innocent victims died because of man's sin. Jesus “died to sin once.” When the temple was dedicated, Solomon offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep as “peace offerings” (1 Kgs 8:63). In Christ's case, one Lamb was

The second verse of this chapter affirmed that we died “to sin.” We are not, however, dead to its influence, for we still struggle with it, as confirmed in chapter seven. We died to sin in the sense of being freed from guilt. To the degree we see this, sin does lose its power over us.

offered one time, and it was adequate for all sin of all time. “For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all.”^{NASB} It was an effective death, and thus never again needed to be experienced. It did what was required, and thus was sufficient.

A parallel occurs when we die with Jesus to sin. It is an effective death, and thus need only be experienced once. It is the kind of death God required, and thus it too is sufficient.

The second verse of this chapter affirmed that we died “to sin.” We are not, however, dead to its influence, for we still struggle with it, as confirmed in chapter seven. We died to sin in the sense of being freed from guilt. **To the degree we see this, sin does lose its power over us.**

Christ's death to sin is in the same sense as verse two. He did not die to the power of sin, for sin never did have power over Him. He died to the guilt of sin—our guilt, which he bore.

HE LIVES TO GOD

In nature, life has a purpose, and death is merely the conclusion of that life. Death, apart from Christ, has no purpose, other than to validate the penalty for sin.

This is not the case, however, in

salvation. **The purpose of death is to allow us to enter into life.** Thus it was with Jesus. The life Jesus now lives is **“to God.”** This is not His life on earth, but His life in heaven. Further, this is Christ's life as a glorified man. His sole purpose for living now is to fulfill the will of God.

In a sense, this was also true when He was upon the earth. There were, however, some mitigating factors. When young, He was *“subject to His parents”* (Lk 2:51). In consideration of those who

received tribute money, Jesus paid tax for Himself and Peter (Matt 17:27). All of this prepared Him to make a complete and satisfactory sacrifice.

Now, Jesus is living *“to God”* in a fuller sense. He *“ever lives to make intercession”* for the saints according to the will of God (Heb 7:25). He is *“bringing many sons to glory,”* thus fulfilling the requirement of God. This is the appointed consequence of being raised from death—life toward God!

RECKONING AND HOW TO DO IT

“¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Now we come to the point of being established. It is founded upon the firm realities of Christ's death and resurrection. It confirms the truth of remission and the consequent imputation of righteousness. When we died with Jesus, were buried with Him, and raised to walk in the newness of life, a very real condition began. It is something on which we can *“reckon.”*

RECKONING

things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think (λογίζεσθε) on these things.”

In Matthew 11:31 the word is translated *“reasoned.”* In Mark 15:28 it is translated *“numbered.”* Other translations include *“despised”* (Acts 19:27), *“thinketh”* (Rom 2:3), *“counted”* (Rom 2:6), *“conclude”* (Rom 3:28), *“esteemeth”* (Rom 14:14), *“thought”* (1

read, *“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin,”* ^{NASB} *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin,”* ^{NIV} *“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin,”* ^{NRSV} *“So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin,”* ^{Douay-Rheims} *“Even so see yourselves as dead to sin,”* ^{BBE} *“In the same way, you must see yourselves as being dead to sin.”* ^{NLT}

It may appear on the surface as though this is a forced way of thinking, and does not comport with reality. But that is NOT the case! We really did die with Christ. We really were buried with Him and raised with Him. The fact that these were spiritual transactions does not mean they were not real. Their reality is in another realm.

The reason this kind of thinking—*“dead indeed to sin”*—does not seem right is because of the presence of the *“old man,”* or the Adamic nature. The vigor with which he speaks to us can lead us to believe he has more strength that he really does. **Our thinking, however, must not be driven by the awareness of our unregenerate portion, but by the “new man”—who we are in Christ Jesus.**

When we are confronted with temptation, we must reason: *“I have died with Jesus. I have been buried by baptism into Christ's death. I have been raised up by the glory of the Father to walk in the newness of life. Sin has no claim on me now, for I have been released from all guilt, and by God's grace can say “NO” to all ungodliness and unrighteousness.”* That is reasoning after a godly manner,

As you can see from this usage, reckoning involves thinking that motivates. It allows for a certain perspective of things—a specific mind-set. “Reckoning” enables a person to see things from a particular perspective.

The word *“reckon”* reflects a sort of Kingdom logic—a proper way of thinking. The word comes from λογίζεσθε (log-iz-es-the), from which our word *“logic”* comes. It reflects a WAY of thinking more that WHAT is thought. It is reasoning that proceeds from the comprehension of what God has revealed. Linguistically the word literally means *“thinking according to logical rules.”* It includes the subordinate meaning, *“to take into account, to make an account of, to count up and weigh the reasons, to gather or infer, and to consider or take into account.”* ^{Thayer}

This precise word is also used in Philippians 4:8. There it is translated *“think.”* *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever*

Cor 13:11), *“suppose”* (2 Cor 11:5), and *“charge”* (2 Tim 4:16).

As you can see from this usage, reckoning involves thinking that motivates. It allows for a certain perspective of things—a specific mind-set. *“Reckoning”* enables a person to see things from a particular perspective.

Our text will instruct us on how to think—how to approach living in *“this present evil world.”* This manner of thinking will be based upon reality.

DEAD INDEED TO SIN

“ . . . reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin . . . ” Other versions

and in strict harmony with the truth. When you reason in this way, faith rises to its full strength, laying hold of Divine power and being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Notice, you are to reason that you are *“dead INDEED to sin.”* The word *“indeed”* means *“surely, truly, and certainly.”*^{Strong’s} Our death to sin is as real and effective as the death of Jesus, in which you have participated. The truth of this will be confirmed to you through your faith. When it is confirmed, you will be able to reason, or *“reckon”* upon the basis of truth.

ALIVE TO GOD

“...reckon yourselves... alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” To be *“alive to God”* means that you are **able** to live for His glory, and do so with joy and satisfaction. Regeneration sensitizes the heart to God. It really does! Because of Christ, God has effected a very real change in us. Our stony hearts have been removed, and we have been given hearts of flesh—hearts that are malleable and can

be enlarged (Psa 119:32).

Being alive to God is living in concert with our new heart. It involves walking in the Spirit and living by faith (Gal 5:16,25; Heb 10:38). It is walking in the light and looking unto Jesus (1 John 1:7; Heb 12:1-2). It is being led by the Spirit and being taught by Jesus (Rom 8:13; Eph 4:20). It is putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10).

All of this, however, does not take place automatically. I have often heard men preach and teach that bearing fruit takes no effort. They say you never hear a fruit tree groaning in an effort to bring forth fruit. It all may have a pleasant ring to it, but it is utterly false. Spiritual life cannot be maintained without extensive effort by the redeemed.

Not Mere Self-Effort

This effort is not mere self-effort, but is joined by the mighty power of God. One of our chief involvements is that of reckoning—of reasoning from the proper

perspective. Having Kingdom logic, so to speak, is anything but simplistic. Ponder how often you have been distorted in your thinking, and the effects that were resulted from that thinking. You had to employ spiritual weaponry to cast down those imaginations, and take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5). What person is willing to say that is easy, and requires no effort?

Reckoning in harmony with the truth of God is an intensive activity, and is vigorously opposed by the devil. It requires constant exposure to the Gospel, a strong faith, and an alert spirit. Accept the Spirit’s challenge to *“reckon.”*

IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

Our *aliveness* to God is strictly owing to our affiliation with Jesus. Being united with Him in death, burial, and resurrection has brought the life upon which we are to reckon. In view of this, our reasoning will be sound and effective only if we remain in conscious fellowship with Christ Jesus. There is no way to reason properly apart from Jesus.

DO NOT LET SIN REIGN

“¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.” The manner in which the Spirit reasons is unusually powerful. When your heart is able to receive and delight in these words, their impact will be most effective. Again, it should be observed that this kind of talk differs significantly from what is regularly served up to many believers.

By saying *“Therefore,”* the Spirit builds upon the truth that has just been affirmed. It is as though He said, *“In view of the fact that we are dead to sin and alive to God . . . ”*

DO NOT LET SIN REIGN

Other versions read, *“do not let sin exercise dominion,”*^{NRSV} *“Do not let sin be ruling,”*^{BBE} *“Do not let sin control the way you live,”*^{NLT} *“you must not allow sin to reign.”*^{NJB}

We learn from this that **it is sin’s nature to rule, or dominate.** It refuses to be subordinate, demanding to sit upon

the throne of our lives. Prior to being in Christ, sin did exercise control over us. But that situation has been changed by our unity with Christ. Now we can reject sin’s demand for dominion. One man has said, *“Since grace in you, sin should not.”*^{John Gill}

This exhortation is not based upon a moral requirement, but a spiritual condition. We are not told to

into which we have been placed encourage us to do it. Our unity with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection demands that we do it!

If sin reigns over those in Christ, it is not out of any necessity. Nothing about life in Christ encourages sin or gives it permission to rule over us. Everything about salvation discourages sin and

This exhortation is not based upon a moral requirement, but a spiritual condition. We are not told to refuse to allow sin to reign because it is a requirement, but because it can be done. The remission of our sins enables us to do this! The imputation of the righteousness of God to us empowers us to do it.

refuse to allow sin to reign because it is a requirement, but because it **can** be done. The remission of our sins enables us to do this! The imputation of the righteousness of God to us empowers us to do it. The gift of the Holy Spirit provides the direction and power to do it. The heavenly places

provides for dominion over it.

YOUR MORTAL BODY

The Spirit is very specific here. He does not say not to allow sin to reign in our minds, but in our **mortal bodies.** This is the part of us that is temporal, and

will pass away. It has been consigned to “dust,” and is the vehicle through which sin is expressed. The challenge of the Spirit makes the matter doable.

We are to stop sin from erupting in

man,” or “flesh,” from us, its remnants remain in our bodies. Do not imagine that “remnant” means assertiveness is not possible, or that “the flesh” is not a formidable foe. Such a thought will surely provide a place where Satan can work.

kingdom of Christ and God” (Eph 5:3-5).

This commission is much like that given to Israel – driving out the unwanted inhabitants of the land. “But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell” (Num 33:55).

Keeping sin from expressing itself in our bodies is particularly important. Our bodies have been “bought with a price,” and do not belong to us (1 Cor 6:15-20). Thus sins of the body are not to be named among believers. The eruption of sin in our bodies brings unusual defilement.

So it is with those in Christ Jesus. If they do not refuse to allow sin to reign in their “mortal bodies,” they are in for a difficult time, and eventual defeat. It may even mean their condemnation. Christians who fall into transgression have allowed sin to reign in their bodies. They have not reckoned, or reasoned, correctly, and thus have sinned.

us—that is our first responsibility. James put it this way, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness” (James 1:21). The word “superfluity” means “overflow,” NKJV “rank growth,” NRSV “abounding of wickedness,” Darby “overweight of evil,” BBE and “superabundance of evil.” Young’s

Keeping sin from expressing itself in our bodies is particularly important. Our bodies have been “bought with a price,” and do not belong to us (1 Cor 6:15-20). Thus sins of the body are not to be named among believers. The eruption of sin in our bodies brings unusual defilement. It is written, “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the

There is no need to attempt to explain the eruption of sin. It is best to confess it quickly, and get back to the business of not allowing sin to control our bodies. There is grace to do this, but it **does** have to be appropriated by the believer. It requires earnestness and diligence. It is possible, however, because we have been united with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The idea is that the remnant of sin remaining in us breaks out in expression. Several versions convey this thought. “All that remains of wickedness,” NASB “all that remains of wickedness,” RWB and “remnants of evil.” NJB Remember, although Jesus has circumcised the “old

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR MEMBERS

“¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” We are custodians of all of our faculties or “members”—the means through which we express ourselves. Other versions read, “the members of your body,” NASB “the parts of your body,” NIV “your members,” NRSV and any part of your body.” NLT

Every part of our persons can be employed in either good or evil, righteousness of unrighteousness, for God or for the devil. Internally our minds, emotion, and will are involved. Our temperament, attitude, loves, and hates, are involved. Thoughts, purposes, desires, and intentions are included. Think of outward faculties. Our eyes, ears, and

mouths, or tongues, are involved. There are hands, feet, and the whole body itself. All of these are a stewardship, and are to be controlled by the “new man.”

DO NOT GIVE YOUR MEMBERS TO SIN

Your various faculties are not to become “instruments of unrighteousness to sin.” Other versions read “to sin, as instruments of wickedness,” NIV “as instruments of iniquity unto sin,” Douay-Rheims “to sin as the instruments of wrongdoing,” BBE “become a tool of wickedness,” NLT “to sin to be used as instruments of evil.” NJB

While men are prone to excuse their actions, the Spirit solemnly admonishes us not allow our faculties to promote iniquity and commit sin. Since we have died with Jesus, been buried with Him, and raised with Him, such concessions

are inexcusable.

GIVE YOUR MEMBERS TO GOD

“... but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Notice the comparison. Presenting our “members” to sin is compared with presenting them “to God.” God can use our thoughts, words, and deeds. He can use our hearing, our wills, and our objectives. He can use our eyes, ears, and mouth. But they must be “presented” to Him.

This is the very thing described in the twelfth chapter of Romans. “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Rom 12:1-2). Here we see that spiritual progress and comprehension depend upon the presentation of our faculties to God.

This is the reason for subduing the rise of sin in our members--that we might give ourselves fully to the Lord.

The word "instruments" means

instruments of war, or weapons. The word comes from *δπλα* and means "arms used for warfare, weapons," and are of an offensive or aggressive nature. This word is translated "armor" in Romans 13:12 and "weapons" in 2 Corinthians 10:4).

Think of it: your various "members" are actually weapons to be used against sin and for righteousness, or against righteousness and for sin. Those who engage in unrighteous acts are engaged in

a war against the truth of God. Their unrighteousness actually "holds back" or suppresses the truth (Rom 1:18). There is a militant posture assumed in unbelief.

On the other hand, those who use their "members" as instruments of righteousness are fighting against iniquity. Their expressions have a suppressing effect upon sin as well as promoting truth. What a stewardship have been given!

THE IMPACT OF GRACE UPON SINNING

"¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." What a wonderful sound to the ears of the elect! "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace," NASB "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace," NIV "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace," NRSV and "Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God's grace." NLT

Settle it in your mind that this is a precise statement of the case. It is said with our unity with Jesus in mind: in His death, burial, and resurrection. Our situation in Christ is real, and therefore so are the effects of being in Him. If this single statement of truth were fully embraced by the religious multitudes, there would be such a dramatic and noticeable change in their behavior

SIN WILL NOT DOMINATE

What a powerful affirmation! It is declared within the context of presenting our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. This will not happen automatically, for we have already been admonished to **not** let sin reign in our mortal bodies. If we exert ourselves in response to the Word, this will happen: **sin will not have dominion over us.**

The Real Situation

This word brings great comfort to the believer--the one who is trusting in

Christ and presenting his members to God. Because the remnants of sin remain in us, we walk in a sort of halting way--much like Jacob after he was blessed. In order for the patriarch to be blessed, his thigh was dislocated (Gen 32:24-26). The result was "he limped on his hip" NKJV

The presence of the "old man" is like having a hip out of joint! If I would do good, "evil is present with me" (Rom 7:21). The flesh lusts against the Spirit, causing us to limp like Jacob

because of the muscle that shrank (v 31).

So it is with us! **The presence of the "old man" is like having a hip out of joint!** If I would do good, "evil is present with me" (Rom 7:21). The flesh lusts against the Spirit, causing us to limp like Jacob (Gal 5:17). Thus, when we read this word, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," our hearts leap, with joy. This is the Word of the Lord--what the Spirit is saying to the churches. It can be heartily embraced without any fear of being disappointed.

It is to be understood that this promise is contingent upon faith, which alone can take hold of Divine commitments (Heb 6:12; 11:33).

YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW

One of the reasons cited for sin

failing to dominate us is that we are "not under law." This expression does not mean we are "without law," or are under no obligation to our Creator and Savior.

We are not under a covenant of works: i.e., "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom 10:5). To be "under law" is to be governed by such an arrangement. Sin results from this because the demands of the law exceed the capabilities of men. Because of this, sin gains the dominance.

We are not under the yoke of the Law. That is, we are not rebels against God, being controlled by a law that contradicts our nature. We are not under the letter of the law, which kills because of its contradiction to our nature (2 Cor 3:6). Where this circumstance exists bondage to sin ensues, for "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor 15:56). Because the law cannot change our affection or nature, it vigorously opposes all who are not born again. It is like a great fan that causes the lusts and wicked desires to flame up in expression (Rom 7:8,11).

When, however, we are identified with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, our nature is so changed that the Law becomes our friend, not our ruler. We love to ponder it, hide it in our heart, and meditate upon it night and day. That very law is written upon our hearts and put into our minds (Heb 10:16).

YOU ARE UNDER GRACE

The other reason cited for the failure of sin to dominate us is that we are “*under grace*.” In this situation, God is “*for us*,” not against us (Rom 8:31). We are under a covenant of blessing, first promised to Abraham (Gen 12:3; 22:18), then confirmed in Jesus (Acts 3:26).

Being “*under grace*” is being in a state of reconciliation to God (2 Cor 5:18-

20), having access to God (Rom 5:2), and being accepted by God (Eph 1:6). Sins have been remitted, your name is written in the Lamb’s book of life, and “*the gift of righteousness*” has been received (Rom 5:17). That is involved in being “*under grace*.”

Here, “*under grace*,” we have a Divine commitment. “*I will never leave*

thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5). Let there be no timorous souls among us! Throw yourself into the holy work of yielding your members as instruments of righteousness. Give yourself to God! Refuse to yield them as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. You are not under law, but have died to the sin which sin reveals. You are under grace, and thus can triumph over sin.

CONCLUSION

When the Holy Spirit traces our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ to our baptism, He puts the truth well within our reach. He also confirms

the utter absurdity of looking at baptism as though it was a purely human work, unrelated to salvation. This view of baptism is to be preached with power to

the people of God. It is a great booster to confidence, as well as a solid exhortation to holiness, presented on a firm foundation.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/6/2000 Continuing in our studies on Romans, we will cover 6:15-23, **“FROM SERVING SIN TO SERVING GOD.”** The Old Covenant demanded men refrain from sinning, although they preferred to sin. The New Covenant reasons with the redeemed to refrain from sinning because they are no longer enslaved to it. The sixth chapter of Romans will powerfully show the reality of this circumstance in Christ Jesus. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship.

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