

**II. SALVATION—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED
(3:21–8:39)****A. Justification—declared righteous in Christ (3:21–5:21)**

- 1. The Divine Method (3:21–31)**
- 2. The OT Illustration of Justification by Faith (4:1–25)**
- 3. The Blessings of Being Justified (5:1–11)**
- 4. Two Humanities, in Adam and in Christ (5:12–21)**

B. Sanctification—made holy in Christ (6–7)

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

6:5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

6:7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

It should be remembered that our death to sin in verse 2 refers to our death to the power of sin, not acts of sin (Schriener on page 304 develops this in great detail). Thus, to die to sin means that the dominion of sin has been broken; we can, therefore, walk in newness of life (6:4). This death took place when Christ died—we died with Him.

Verses 2–5 contain references to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and to our participation with Him in all three events. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are not only historical events, they are also personal experiences that all believers share in through faith and are pictured in baptism. So we have been baptized into His death (6:3) and we have been buried with Him through baptism into death (6:4), so that as Christ was raised from the dead we also might walk in newness of life (6:4).

Our death is a past event. “The time element should not disturb us, because if we sinned in Adam (Ro. 5), it is equally possible to have died to sin with Christ. At this stage of the teaching it is not a question of our personal, conscious participation, but simply of our position as God has arranged it and as He sees it” (Harrison, 70).

Although the verses focus on the pictorial imagery of baptism, the significance is in explaining the reality of our union with Christ.

Verses 6 and 7 restate and elaborate the meaning of the believer’s death spoken of in verses 3–5 (Schreiner, 315). Verse 6 contains three closely related clauses that tell us that something happened in order that something else might happen, in order that a third thing might happen (Stott, 175).

our old self was crucified with Him

in order that our body of sin might be done away with

so that we would no longer be slaves to sin

According to verses 6 and 7, in order to no longer be slaves to sin, the body of sin must be done away with; this comes about through our crucifixion with Christ, and this is why Paul wants us to know that we have been crucified with Christ. In other words, Paul wants us to know that we have been united with Christ in His death so that we will no longer be slaves to sin.

These verses raise three questions:

- What is our old self?
- What is our body of sin?
- What does it mean to no longer be a slave to sin?

What is our old self?

The “old self” is who we are in Adam. This fits with the parallel between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:15–19. In Adam we die (5:15, 17), are condemned and judged (5:16, 18), and are made sinners (5:19). In Christ we receive grace and life (5:15, 17), and are made righteous (5:17, 19; justified; 5:16, 18). When we are crucified with Christ our connections with Adam are destroyed. The word “self” is used because it is not simply part of the person that has been changed; it is the whole person that has died (Hodge, 197). Thus, it is incorrect to say that a Christian has both the old self and new self existing together. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” The old self has been cast aside (Colossians 3:9: “you laid aside the old self”). We “have put on the new self” (Col. 3:10). “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

This means that the death of our old self does not eradicate sinful desires; it does, however, affect our relationship to sin. The purpose of our crucifixion with Christ is so that “our body of sin might be done away with” (6:6). This is necessary to no longer be slaves to sin.

What is our body of sin?

The expression “body of sin” most likely describes our human person dominated or controlled by sin (see Ro. 6:12–13). Paul calls it our “body of sin” since sinful acts are carried out through our bodies. In order to break dominion of sin over our bodies our relationship with Adam must first be severed. This occurred when we died with Christ.

What does it mean to no longer be a slave to sin?

When someone is a slave they have no choice but to obey their master. Slavery to sin is the lot of all those in Adam. Unbelievers do not have the freedom to do what is pleasing to God. In John 8:34 Jesus says, “everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”

This does not mean that sin is forced on people against their will. “It means that they invariably choose to sin because sin is the circumference of their desires. Believers have been liberated from such slavery to sin and are now free from its clutches” (Schreiner, 316–317).

If a slave were to die, he would be freed from his master's control. This is what happened to us. The old person (who we are in Adam as people ruled by sin) was crucified with Christ. This means that our bodies are no longer dominated by sin's influence. Thus, we are longer slaves of sin.

This leads to a practical question.

If our old self has been crucified, why do we still sin?

The answer is in the already/not yet character of the Christian life. Some things in our salvation have happened already, yet they will not be enjoyed in their fullness until our salvation is complete. For example, our old self has been crucified so that we are presently no longer slaves to sin; we can now use our bodies as instruments to serve God. We are also enabled to walk in newness of life because we are united to Him and He conquered sin at His resurrection. Lastly, we presently have eternal life.

However, at the same time these blessings are not yet experienced in their fullness. We have had Christ's righteousness credited to us and have been given life, yet we still die. We are raised with Christ now, but our resurrection is still spoken of as future. In short, we are not yet liberated from everything present in this evil age.

In the same way, we will not experience freedom from the slavery of sin to the degree that we will at the consummation of our salvation. Sin's mastery over us (its power or dominion) has been broken already, so we are freed from its tyranny. However, we are not free from its presence and influence. We shall battle sin until the day of our salvation is complete.

Our union with Christ continues to be the theme in verses 8–10, but the emphasis changes from dying with Christ to living with Him.

**6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.
6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

We are told to consider our status in Christ. If we believe that we are united with Christ in His death, then we should believe we have been delivered from sin's control over us. However, according to verse 8, we should also believe that we will participate in Christ's life. The future tense "shall live" need not refer to a future event, but to the certainty of sequence. If one thing happens, the other will certainly follow as in Romans 6:5 (Hodge, 196, 199; Murray, 223).

When Jesus broke the bonds of the grave, there was nothing more that death could do. Though death held Him briefly, it did not master Him (6:9b). Jesus can no longer die because the power of death over Him has been broken.

In verses 3, 6, and 9 Paul assumes that believers know this. **Knowledge of who we are in Christ is critical in overcoming sin in practice.**

In verse 10 Paul wants believers to know that since they live together with Christ they can experience His resurrection power. The argument advances as to why death's dominion over Christ has ended. The

transgression of Adam brought sin into the world (5:17) and sin reigned in death (5:21). Jesus defeated death by overcoming the power of death to hold someone in its grasp.

Of course, when it says, “He died *to* sin” it can’t mean that Jesus died to His own sin for He never sinned. This could mean a number of other things; (1) He died for the destruction of sin, (2) He died on account of sin, (3) He died in order to free Himself from the burden of the sin of His people which He voluntarily chose to bear (II Cor. 5:21), or, He experienced the consequence of sin in order to break sin’s dominion. But the main point is that His death to sin was final. It “needs no second fight, and leaves no second foe” (Bruce, 139) and the life He lives continues on forever.

a. Reckon these facts true concerning ourselves (6:11–12)

6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Knowing that Christ died and rose, and having the knowledge that we are united with Him should change our perspective on sin. However, for these truths to affect our lives we must apply them through faith. Paul says we are to “. . . count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” What is true in itself should be true in the minds and hearts of believers. To “count” is the same word as “credit” in Romans 4. There it meant to credit righteousness. Here it means to add up all the facts in verses 1–10. If it is true that we have died to the power of sin and rose to newness of life with Christ, we should view ourselves in light of who we really are and live accordingly. It is one thing to be placed in union with Christ, but victory over sin’s dominion does not come unless we believe it and apply it. When sin wants to gain dominion over us, we need to act upon what is true in us by virtue of our union with Christ. We need to respond as a dead man would to sin, and live in the newness of life we possess. It should be noted that “count” is a present tense verb which in Greek signifies continuous action. One must continually consider oneself dead to sin in order to control the dominance of sin.

Verse 11 is a command, but it is a command to *believe* something, not to *do* something. He is telling us to believe that we are dead to sin. This is not make-believe or a mind game. The believer really is dead to sin, but if we don’t come to grips with that reality we will never have victory.

6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

The word “therefore” in verse 12 signals the practical inference from what precedes. God tells us to act upon what we know to be true; you are not to let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.

To “reign” signifies to exercise uncontrolled authority (Hodge, 203). In verse 6 Paul said that our union with Christ means we are no longer slaves to sin. Verse 14 is clear that sin does not reign over the believer. Because of this Paul can say, “do not let sin reign.” To say to a slave, “Do not act like a slave” is to mock his slavery. But to say the same to a freed slave is “an appeal to put into effect the privileges and rights of his liberation” (Murray, 227).

Our “mortal body” is probably a reference to our whole person, including our body. The body is not viewed as evil in itself, but is the organ in which sin is revealed. The lusts of the body are perceived as demanding our obedience. Paul would have us resist that power and commands engagement of the will to not let sin reign in our bodies.

The person we were in Adam that was ruled by sin was crucified with Christ, but sin itself was not destroyed. “The exhortation is that we should not yield to this dethroned adversary of Christ and the soul, but strenuously strive against its efforts to gain ascendancy over us, and to bring us again into bondage” (Hodge, 203).

Note:

Paul often makes comments about truths in both the indicative mood (a statement of fact) and the imperative mood (as a command). For example, Galatians 3:27 says, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Having been clothed with Christ is a statement of fact. Yet in Romans 13:14 Paul tells us to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” This is a command. In the same way, in I Corinthians 1:30 and II Corinthians 5:17 we are said to be “In Christ.” But then in Colossians 2:6 we are commanded to “continue to live in Him.” Romans 6:11–12 is another example.

As Christians, we experience what Paul talks about in Galatians 5:17; “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Once we know we are not enslaved to our old nature we have the freedom to not sin. Paul tells us to exercise that freedom and not let sin rule.

Jerry Bridges, on pages 75–76 in *The Discipline of Grace*, gives an excellent illustration of how these verses are lived out in a practical way.

b. Present yourselves as alive from the dead (6:13–14).

6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Verse 13 explains how the reign of sin can be defeated in our lives. One must choose to present the members of your body to God as instruments of righteousness.

The word translated as “present” means “to give up to the power or service of.” “Instrument” is a word of general use and can refer to tackle on ships, tools of a craftsman or most frequently, as weapons. If “body” in verse 13 is taken literally, then Paul is saying that the believer should not use his eyes, ears, hands, etc. as instruments of evil, but as weapons of righteousness. If “body” in verse 13 is figurative, meaning “you,” then “members” must mean “faculties” like mind or power. In either case, we should not allow our body, physically or mentally, to be at the disposal of sin for its use. Rather, the body is to be used as an instrument of righteousness.

Act as those who are alive from the dead. Who, after being resurrected, would desire to return to life in the grave?

6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The future tense “shall not be your master” doesn’t refer to a future experience, but to an assured fact of a present experience (Murray, 228).

The expression “under the Law” appears a number of times in the Bible. Though the English is constant there are two separate Greek prepositions that translate as “under”—*en* (ἐν; Ro. 2:12; 3:19) and *hupo* (ὑπό; Ro. 6:14, 15; 1 Cor. 9:20; Gal. 3:23; 4:4, 5:21; 5:18). *En* (ἐν) indicates the *sphere* in which the subject is acting and dwelling. This accurately describes the condition of the Jew. The Jews’ existence and actions happened in the sphere of the Law. *Hupo* (ὑπό), on the other hand, refers to being *subject to the power of* something or someone. An excellent example of how this is used is in Matthew 8:9 where it says, “For I also am a man *under* (*hupo*—ὑπό,) authority, with soldiers *under* (*hupo*—ὑπό) me. . .” Just as the centurion was under the power and authority of others, so were his soldiers under his authority.

Thus, to be under the Law is to be under the entire Mosaic legal system in its totality and to be subject to its penalties. It is to live and act in its sphere.

Now the Bible makes it extremely clear that the Christian is not under the Law: “sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under Law but under grace” (Ro. 6:14); “Should we sin because we are not under Law but under grace?” (Ro. 6:15); “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.” (Gal. 5:18); “To those under the Law I became as one under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law) so that I might win those under the Law.” (1 Cor. 9:20).

Notice carefully that verse 14 says that the reason sin will **not** have dominion over us is because we are **not** under the law. If we **were** under the law, sin **would** have dominion over us! And if sin has dominion over us we are not being sanctified. Being free from the law gives us freedom from the bondage of sin which results in sanctification. Galatians 3:2b–3 also denies that sanctification comes through the law; “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” The believers of Galatia had begun their Christian life by faith, not by keeping the law. Why now would they be deceived into thinking that what had begun in the Spirit apart from the law could be perfected by the flesh under the law? This is the force of the whole argument in Galatians. The believers in the church were not trying to be saved by the law, but were trying to please God and grow in holiness by seeking to live under the law. Paul calls this accursed (Gal. 1:8–9; 5:12).