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A1007 – February 14, 2010 – Galatians 3:1-3 – Are You So Stupid?

Last week we had a question about the two men crucified at the same time as Christ. One on His right, one on His left. We've heard that one was a thief and the other a murderer. But all we can find in the Gospels is that they were thieves. Can you clarify? Answer, you're correct, they were both thieves. Two Greek words are used of the men. Luke uses the term *kakourgos* (i.e. criminals). There are a couple of forms of this word, the form used by Luke means they were thieves by profession. So they were part of an organized crime syndicate and after many years of carrying out thievery they were finally captured and executed. Matthew and Mark use the term *lestes* (i.e. robbers) and *lestes* refers to someone who steals openly and violently. So they were insurgents, perhaps for some cause they considered righteous. Putting the two together the evidence points in the direction that the two men were part of the sect of the Zealots. The Zealots were an insurgency group that was militantly opposed to Rome and they often carried out criminal behavior against Rome. Josephus identified robbers with Zealots. And apparently these two men were caught and crucified one on either side of Christ.

Let's turn to Gal 3:1. Today we'll be moving into the spiritual life or what we call the doctrine of sanctification. Once you begin to digest the book of Galatians, you realize that Paul's primary emphasis is on how to live the spiritual life. Of course, he also talks a lot about how to enter the spiritual life or what we call the doctrine of justification. And the means of entry is justification by faith. Entrance is by faith and not by works of the law. Now the question becomes how to live the spiritual life or how to grow, that's our sanctification and that's Paul's major concern. He wants the believers at Galatia to move forward in the spiritual life rather than fall back. But obviously they had fallen back and this has Paul perplexed. Paul is confused

and he's shocked, he finds it very disturbing that so recently after they had enjoyed God's grace they deserted God's grace.

Gal 3:1, **You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?** Now this is a very stiff rebuke, it's full of emotion and there's something we can learn from this. There's nothing wrong with a stiff rebuke when it stems from righteous anger. The Bible isn't against all anger. The Bible is against anger that results in sinning. The Lord Jesus Christ got angry down at the Temple and the Lord Jesus Christ threw tables over but the Lord Jesus Christ did not sin. Paul is angry at these believers because these believers have rejected the truth and bought into lies. And so Paul calls them stupid. Poor Paul didn't understand how to communicate very nicely. But as one commentator says, it should be translated, "you stupid Galatians!" And the reason for this kind of approach you'll realize as we work through the verses but the main thing is that they need to be shocked and so this kind of language is used by God the Holy Spirit through Paul to shock arrogant unbelief.

Now the word **foolish** or "stupid" is *anoetos* and it comes from two words, *a-* which means "no" and *noeo* which means "mind." So he's saying you have "no mind," you are stupid spiritually or as I translate it, you are dull-minded with respect to spiritual things. To get the flavor of this word contrast a dull mind with a sharp mind. A sharp mind spiritually is a person who has spiritual discernment, they can detect errors, even slight nuances. So a believer that is dull of mind does not have spiritual discernment, they cannot detect errors, they are very easily deceived, they are tossed to and fro by the latest greatest thing that some idiot has published down at the Christian bookstore.

Now Paul's trying to get at the source of this stupidity. What has happened so that you could get so stupid spiritually? And the only thing he can come up with is they've been **bewitched**. Now notice the word **bewitched**, *baskaino*. Paul can come up with no other explanation for their dullness than they have been hypnotized or put under the spell of evil. In fact, the word *baskaino* refers to the evil eye. And if you've been to Europe you've seen the *baskaino*, the "evil eye" which you see here on the ancient streets of Ephesus and still very popular today as something that wards off evil spirits. These things sell like hotcakes in Europe. But in reality it doesn't ward off evil spirits it draws

evil spirits. This is one of the ancient symbols of evil and the demonic realm. So this gives us insight into Paul's analysis of what had occurred. They had been demonically infiltrated. Now let's review our six steps down into deep, deep carnality. We've seen a lot of this on Wednesday nights in Hosea because the nation Israel in Hosea's day was going down, down, down into deep depravity and the same thing is occurring here with the Galatian believers. These same truths apply whether it's the Old or New Testaments.

The first step down is the rejection of the knowledge of God. They had the knowledge of God; they knew that justification was by faith and they knew that sanctification was by faith, Paul taught them that and now they had rejected those doctrines. Someone had come in and bewitched them with this doctrine that sanctification is by works of the Law. And since rejection of true knowledge is sinful then they fell into step two, the mind is darkened. What do we mean the mind is darkened? We mean that there's a negative consequence in the mind, we mean that the mind cannot discern spiritual truth anymore; we mean that you become spiritually stupid. And evidently Paul says, this came through demonic forces which is the third step down. Tremendous demonic influence has come over these believers through the Judaizers that has led their minds astray and now they are in a state of spiritual stupidity and they are trying to be sanctified by the flesh, they are trying to grow spiritually by the flesh. So Paul says in this situation, when a believer is on the third rung down I've got to call them stupid just to get their attention!

And now he says, verse 1, are you so stupid, **Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed before your eyes as crucified**. Now if you just understood all that Jesus Christ and Him crucified meant you'd see how stupid you are. It's a difficult expression because obviously they were not in Jerusalem in AD33 to see Jesus crucified. So what is Paul saying? What he means by the expression **publicly portrayed** is publicly proclaimed. The liberating message of Christ and Him crucified had been publicly proclaimed before their very eyes and they knew that Christ and Him crucified was everything. And if Christ and Him crucified is everything then what is the Law of Moses? Nothing. Nothing in the sense of providing spiritual life. Only Christ can provide a basis for spiritual life. Not law keeping. So that's why he calls them stupid in verse 1, they've been demonically infiltrated and Paul has to shock them back to right thinking.

He continues the rebuke in verse 2, **This is the only thing I want to find out from you:** now look at the tone, you can hear Paul's tone, "just answer me one thing would you. I mean, c'mon, let's think here for one second. Can you do that, do you have enough of a mind left to think through one question? Because if you can answer this one question we can be done with this nonsense." Here's the question: **Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?** Now look at the question. They should know the answer to that question. They didn't receive the Spirit by works of the Law. They were Gentiles. They weren't even under the Law. The Law was the furthest thing from these people's minds when they were saved. They were pagans. All they heard was Paul preaching the gospel and they believed the gospel. So it's obvious they didn't receive the Spirit by works of the Law, it was by **faith**.

Now there's a theological issue that has come about in church history that can be answered by this verse. One of the things that developed, particularly out of Augustine and later in Reformed circles is that regeneration precedes faith. That the Holy Spirit has to come in and do this surgery on the human heart and then, after the surgery there's faith. Does that fit with this verse? What's the problem with that in this verse? What question would Paul have to ask to get that theology? How would he set up the question? Wouldn't he have asked, "Did you receive faith by works of the Law or by the Spirit?" But see they didn't receive faith by a work of the Holy Spirit in their heart, they received the Spirit by faith. It's exactly the reverse. So the structure of this question categorically denies the Reformed Doctrine that regeneration precedes faith. Now we're not denying that the Holy Spirit has to do a work before a person has faith, of course He does a work up front, we're just not convinced that it's the work of regeneration that happens up front. What the work appears to be is His work of conviction. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do when He comes? John 16:8-11. He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Those things are preparatory to a person having faith in Christ. So that's the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit isn't received until a person has faith in Christ. So we have two different works of the Holy Spirit going on here, one before salvation, that's preparatory to faith, that's His work of conviction. Think about it. Doesn't conviction have to come before faith? I haven't got any reason to believe in Christ until I realize I've got a problem. So the Holy Spirit does that before,

and the way He does that is through the preaching of the word of God. As the word is preached God the Holy Spirit impresses upon a person they've got a problem and Christ is the answer. So that happens before - it has to. But the second work here occurs at the moment of faith in Christ and that's His regenerating work, that's the moment of the new birth. So don't confuse the two works. Paul says in this verse, or rather he asks, **Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing with faith?** Answer, at the moment of gospel hearing with faith. They should know that. By the way, how would they know that? How would they know that at the moment of hearing with faith they received the Holy Spirit? They didn't get wet. This isn't water baptism, this is Spirit baptism. And since Spirit baptism is a dry baptism how did they know they received the Spirit at the moment of faith in Christ? Obviously there was some manifestation of the Spirit - some visible indication. We suggest verse 5 is discussing the indication. **So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?** Again, obviously the answer is **by hearing with faith**. So these people saw miracles, they didn't all have a miracle; it just says miracles were performed among them. We have one of these miracles in Galatia mentioned in Acts 14:8 "At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and *began* to walk." So there were miracles done as they heard Paul preach, they were done through the apostle Paul by God the Holy Spirit which authenticated Paul as an apostle and authenticated the message Paul spoke.

Now we don't experience that today. There are no apostles. There may be miracles but not worked through individuals because that authenticates the individual and God is not doing that at this time. We've covered all of this in the Book of Acts. If you are investigating the tongues issue or miracles I suggest you get the audio on the Book of Acts and we handle this four or five times in a lot more detail than we will cover today. I don't want to get far off track of Paul's point in our verses so let me just give you the bottom line. There are *four periods of high frequency miracles* in the Scriptures. You can check the record yourself, hundreds of people have checked the record and they all come to the same conclusion. There are four periods of high frequency

miracles. Those are the Exodus & Conquest period under Moses and Joshua. The second high frequency period doesn't occur until Elijah and Elisha, 600 years later. The third period of high frequency miracles is Christ and the apostles. That's the period covered in our verse. That, by the way, came 800 years after the prior period. And finally the fourth period of high frequency miracles is in connection with the Second Coming of Christ, it involves Elijah and the two witnesses. We've pointed out the common elements in each of these four periods. Each high frequency period is kicked off by one man and usually ended under the ministry of another man. Each high frequency period last for one to two generations, that's all. And finally, each high frequency period involves the kingdom, either it is being introduced or it is under threat. If you want more, again, check the lessons, I'll talk to you but I appreciate it if you've worked it out, you've done some reading, you've thought about the issues.

This occurred in the third high frequency period of Christ and the apostles. The Holy Spirit was working these miracles through Paul to the Galatians so he asks in verse 2; **did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?** And the answer is hearing with faith.

So let's keep working with the argument, and here we'll spend some time. Verse 3, **Are you so foolish?** Again, are you guys so stupid? C'mon guys, you've been had and I just want you to think, if you still can, about what you're doing. So he asks, **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?** This answer is simple. See, Paul, when dealing with believers that are stupid spiritually, has to deal with them in very baby terms. So if you began by the Spirit you have to finish by the Spirit, you can't finish by the flesh. It doesn't make any sense to start one way and finish another. But there are some issues here we want to take some time to look at. The first thing we want to clarify is the word **perfected**. If you have the NIV it says something like "attain your goal," which is better than **perfected**. The word group *teleo* and it means to finish, to complete something, to mature. And here it means mature. Spiritual maturity is the issue, how do we grow to maturity. We start off in the spiritual life by the Spirit and we are newborns, we are little bitty babies, we're immature, but that's how we got our start, by the Spirit. Now are we going to grow into adults, are we going to mature **by the flesh?** That's the question. So we have to talk about the **Spirit** and we

have to talk about the **flesh**. These are two things we have not talked about so far.

These are two ways of walking, you can walk by the Spirit or by the flesh and if you walk by the Spirit then the produce is the fruit of the Spirit and if you walk by the flesh then the produce is the fruit of the flesh. And we can walk either way as Christians. Christians have the Holy Spirit and Christians have the flesh. So you will walk one way or the other way but there is no neutrality. And the walk by the flesh is either licentiousness or legalism while the walk by the Spirit is by faith.

So let's start with a discussion of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, He is not an it, He is not a force. He is the third member of the Trinity. God is Triune and by this we mean that you have God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit; there are three persons but one God. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Spirit, they're separate persons, but each of those persons is God. So there is only one God. We're not talking about three gods. We're talking about one God and three persons. Just like the hymn says, God in three persons...blessed Trinity. This isn't a class on the Trinity, this is just a statement of doctrine. I'll be covering this in detail in the Framework class in about six months. Paul's not going into all that here so we don't want to either. We just state it. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. What do we mean by calling Him the third person? This is a terminology from church history, people have noticed that the Father sent the Son and the Father and the Son sent the Spirit, so you have this order of sending. No one sends the Father, so He's the first person, the Father sends the Son, so the Son is the second person, and the Father and the Son send the Spirit, so the Spirit is the third person. So third person is just the order of procession or sending. Now God the Holy Spirit was sent when? On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2. So historically we have the cross of Christ, we have the resurrection of Christ, and we have the ascension of Christ in Acts 1. Christ told the apostles, you wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit; I'm going to send the Spirit. So He ascended and ten days later in the city of Jerusalem God the Father and God the Son sent the Spirit to begin a new ministry heretofore never engaged in. The Holy Spirit ministered before in other ways. We know in Gen 1 He was involved in creation. We know in Gen 6 He was involved in restraining sin. We know from John 3 He regenerated people in the OT, and that doctrine in the OT is referred to as circumcision of heart. If it's not identical to

regeneration then it's something like it. Jesus tells Nicodemus that to enter the kingdom of God you have to be "born again." And obviously there were OT saints like Abraham, David and many others that will be in the kingdom. So from what Jesus says they had to be born again. The Holy Spirit must have engaged in that ministry. But our point is that the Holy Spirit had been ministering in various ways already, but on the day of Pentecost He began some new ministries. We want to look at four of those new ministries in brief.

The first one we want to look at is *Baptism*. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit began on the Day of Pentecost. The word "baptism" means identification. When a person is baptized by the Spirit their identification changes. Before our baptism by the Holy Spirit we are identified with Adam. At the moment of faith we were co-crucified, co-buried and co-resurrected with Christ and now we are identified with Christ. This is a positional or identification truth. This is not a feeling, this is not an experience, this is a declaration of Scripture. You could never know it by any of your five senses. The only way we know it is because Scriptures declares it.

The second new ministry of the Holy Spirit beginning with Pentecost is *Sealing*. At the moment of faith in Christ we are sealed in Him and what this has to do with is the ancient concept where a person had a signet ring and on the ring he had his family's seal on it. And he would take that seal and put it on something and that was a sign of ownership, of possession. And the sealing of the Holy Spirit is that act whereby God the Holy Spirit puts His seal on us making us His possession. We are His and we always will be His. He has sealed us in Christ. That's one of ~1001 ways you can get the doctrine of eternal security.

The third new ministry of the Holy Spirit is *Indwelling* and this is where God the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer. To get the concept of God's presence, where did God reside in the OT? He resided in the Temple in the form of Shekinah Glory. Where did the people meet with God? At the Temple. So God's presence or residence is the place God meets with the believer. It's a meeting place. Another thing we can gather from this is greater precision in the meeting place. In what part of the Temple did Shekinah Glory dwell? There are two words for the Temple, the *ieron* that referred to the entire Temple complex and the *naos*, that referred to the Holy of Holies. Where did the Shekinah Glory dwell? In the *naos*, the Holy of

Holies. Now, during the Church Age, who is the Temple? The believer is the Temple and God the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in every believer. But which word is used of the believer? *Ieron* or *naos*? The *naos*, the Holy of Holies, so an inner sanctuary has been created as a place for the Holy Spirit to dwell in the believer.

The fourth ministry of the Holy Spirit is *Filling*. This one is not totally new; certain individuals were filled in the OT to fulfill certain tasks or functions. But the availability for this ministry in a temporary and repetitive way is new from the day of Pentecost. Believers are told to be filled with, or by means of the Spirit. The concept has to do with an amount and in the parallel in Colossians the defining expression of this ministry is “let the word of Christ dwell richly within you.” So the Spirit and His function of filling the believer is directly related to the word of God dwelling richly in the believer. So this is not a mystical ministry, it’s the Spirit of God utilizing the word of God to produce the fruit of the Spirit of God. So we want to maximize our intake of the word of God because that gives the Spirit of God more material to work with in our lives. He’s not going to override our volition, the Holy Spirit is a gentlemen and He uses what we know, not what we don’t know. Also we can lose the filling of the Holy Spirit when we sin but we can recover the filling of the Holy Spirit by confessing our sin.

So that’s quite a bit about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Now we come to the flesh. Remember, you can try to be matured by means of the flesh, which is legalism or licentiousness or you can try to reach maturity by means of the Spirit, which is faith in the word of God. Those are the only two options, there is no middle ground. At any moment you are either walking by the flesh or walking by the Spirit. At any moment you are producing the fruit of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit.

So what is the **flesh**? That’s our second word, it’s *sarx*. Now it can obviously mean the physical body. It doesn’t mean that here but it can mean that. The flesh is the fallen component of man. In the post-Fall world we have three enemies of sanctification; the world, the flesh and the devil. The world is the world system that is opposed to God. It operates on the principle of autonomy and organizes itself around the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. The devil is the fallen spirit being that is chief of the demonic realm, he is opposed to us and constantly is working to deceive us.

The flesh is a component of man after the Fall and it houses the sin nature. Turn to Rom 7:18. This is not an exegesis of these verses; we just want to show a few things about the flesh. No one can deny that all believers still have the flesh. We just saw Paul say, what are you going to do, having begun by the Spirit are you going to be matured by the flesh? So they still have the flesh. The question is do all believers have a sin nature? What do we mean by sin nature? Ryrie says the sin nature is a capacity, Chafer says it's inborn sin, others say it's an inclination or a tendency, some prefer not to use the expression at all but as Walvoord says it's difficult to avoid the term and have any idea what is being referred to. In any case, here's one place where the concept of the sin nature is shown. Rom 7:18, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh;" Well if it's not good and it dwells in the flesh then what is it? That's what people call the sin nature. Now maybe you don't like the term nature. Fine, call it indwelling sin, but somehow you've got to communicate to believers that sin is dwelling in their flesh. Notice it again in verse 20: "But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me." Notice the expression "sin dwells in me," that's Paul as a believer. Some theologians have said this is Paul as an unbeliever. But that is very rare for a theologian to take that position because it's so unworthy of serious consideration. From Rom 5:9ff Paul has been referring to sanctification. So this is just discussing the struggle that Paul initially had of being sanctified because he tried legalism and he's saying it didn't work because all it did was activate the sin in his flesh. But notice another thing you can gather from verse 20. Paul says, "if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it." It sounds like Paul just avoided responsibility for his sin. What do you mean Paul it's not you? Paul means, it's not who I really am. Really I am in Christ. I'm identified with Him. So when I sin I'm not acting consistently with who I am in Christ. That's the point. Verse 21, "I find then the principle" or law "that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good." Now he's saying evil is in him, that is, in the flesh, so do you see that Paul still has a sin nature? Whatever you want to call it, it's there. And also you feel the tension Paul is facing. We've all felt this tension. Verse 22 "For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man." Where did we say the Holy Spirit dwells? In the inner man, that inner sanctum. So He is there too, but also this other thing: the flesh with sin indwelling is there. Verse 23, "but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members." So again,

this is the concept of the sin nature, indwelling sin, here he calls it the law of sin and so if you don't like the expression sin nature don't use it. I do use it; it's a common theological term that refers to sin dwelling in the flesh. Now Paul is frustrated in Rom 6 and you can sense his frustration that I've got these two things going on inside of me. Who I am is I am in Christ, that's my identity; I have been crucified with Christ, buried with Christ and resurrected with Christ. That is all positional truth. That's an identification truth. I'm no longer identified with Adam. I'm a new man. I am in Christ and that's who I really am, that's my new ID card. It says "in Christ." But then I still have the flesh and sin dwelling in the flesh. And so I want to do the good but I can't do it because this sin dwelling in me won't do the good. And he's frustrated. Paul really struggled with this and all believers have struggled with this. If someone says they haven't struggled with this they really have a problem. So Paul struggled.

Chapter 8 is the answer to the struggle. How am I going to be victorious over sin? And the answer is the Holy Spirit. Verse 1, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." So if you are in Christ Jesus you have a new identity in Him and there is no condemnation, you are set free from the penalty of sin, you're eternally secure. Verse 2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." So in addition to being free from the penalty of sin you are also set free from the power of sin. You do not have to obey the sin that dwells in your flesh. Verse 3, "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." There again, the sin is in the flesh, that's where it dwells, that's the sin nature. For what purpose? Verse 4, "so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. So there's you're two ways of walking. You have two alternatives, you can walk according to the flesh or walk according to the Spirit. There's no other way to walk. Verse 5 we get defined for us what it means to walk by the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, so this is very important, this is where we get into doctrine, into content, into thinking. "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace..." Do you see that it's all about the mindset? What are you thinking about? Are you thinking about the content of Scripture or not?

That's why God gives us so much content in the word of God. He wants us to think about it constantly, over and over cycling the content of Scripture through the mind over all day long every day. You're going to be filling your mind with something and it's either going to be the imagery of the world or the imagery of the Word. That's why the Scriptures are so important. That's why when you read the Scriptures you must read for imagery. The Bible is full of vivid imagery. It's a living book. That's why we've taken the great events of the OT in the framework class and we've gone over and over and over them. Because what I'm saying that this is not a suggestion; this is a declaration of truth. Those events are what God the Holy Spirit utilizes in daily life. This is what it means to walk by the Spirit; it's to set your mind on the things of the Spirit of God which is the word of God! That's where He's at work. We are in a war every day in our minds. Why do you think when Paul applies all this in Rom 12 he says be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. Yes, we have the mind of Christ but that is a positional truth, if we had the mind of Christ experientially we could only think perfect thoughts. But Paul also says, be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind and that's the experiential truth. You have to understand yes you're a new man, yes you have the mind of Christ, yes the Holy Spirit indwells you. But those are all positional truths. The experiential reality is that you still have the flesh, you still have sin dwelling in your flesh and you can still walk according to the flesh.

There are two ways to walk. I want to spend some time quoting theologians on this because people get confused. This from L.S. Chafer, "The Scriptures are exceedingly clear in teaching that the flesh with its sin nature is still a living, vital part of every believer and that he will continue in possession of the flesh and its fallen nature until the body is redeemed at the coming of Christ or until he leaves this earthly frame behind in death. Notions are entertained that the sin nature which is in the flesh can be eradicated now by some supposed divine achievement. But the truth obviously remains that the world, the flesh, and the devil are never removed; they are overcome by the superior power of the Holy Spirit in response to an attitude of faith...This evil nature which is termed "sin in the flesh" (Rom 8:3) and "sin that dwelling in me" (cf. Rom. 7:17, 20-21, 23) has already been brought into judgment by Christ in His death...The judgment of the flesh with its lusts was achieved perfectly by Christ in His death unto the sin nature. This judgment is referred to in Romans 8:3, where the Apostle says that Christ "condemned

[or, judged] sin in the flesh.” Paul does not imply that the flesh and its lusts were rendered inactive or destroyed...A judgment rather is gained against the flesh and its lust by Christ and so the old man’s” power may by the Spirit be disannulled for such time as victory is claimed by means of the Spirit...Deliverance from the flesh and its lusts, then, is by the Spirit on the ground of Christ’s death.”

Here’s Charles Ryrie in his *Basic Theology*, “(1) Redemption includes a judgment on the sin nature so that the believer is no longer bound to serve sin (Rom 6:18; 8:1; Gal 5:24). All that belongs to the old life has been crucified with Christ. Death always means separation; therefore, His death separated us from the dominion of original sin. (2) However, the old is not eradicated until the resurrection; therefore, God has given us His Holy Spirit to give us victory over sin in daily life...We are separated from the dominion of sin by Christ’s death, and we are free from its domination by the power of the Spirit.” (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 254.) Tom Constable elaborates on other related points that agree.

“Our old “man” or “self” refers to the person we were before we experienced justification. That person was crucified with Christ (cf. Col. 3:9). That person is now dead. Nevertheless we can adopt his or her old characteristics if we choose to do so (cf. Eph. 4:22). The believer is not the same person he or she used to be before justification (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). The old man (old self) is not the same as the old nature. (See John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8*, p. 45.) The old nature refers to our sinful human nature that every human being possesses as long as he or she lives. The old nature is the same as the flesh (cf 7:5).” (Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Ro 6:6.)

And more explanation,

“Even though the old man has died, the old nature lives on. I am not the same person I was before justification because sin no longer can dominate me, but I still have a sinful human nature.”ⁱ

He also says about his uncomfortableness using the term “nature,”

“I prefer not to use the term “new nature.” It does not appear in Scripture. The New Testament presents the Christian not as a person with two natures warring within him or her. It presents the Christian as a person with one sinful nature (the flesh) that is in conflict with the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16–23). It also speaks of the Christian as struggling with the decision to live as the new man that he or she now is. Our alternative is to live as the old man who we were but are no longer (cf. Rom. 7:13–24).”ⁱⁱ

Alright, Paul has made his point; arrogant believers who have been deceived by demonic doctrines have actually become stupid spiritually. That’s a consequence for negative volition to God’s word. So Paul has to use shock treatment to wake them up. He uses the question format to get them to thinking properly. Having begun by the Spirit are you now being matured by the flesh? The Spirit and the flesh are at war with one another in a continual battle. The Spirit has been given to us to defeat the flesh which houses the sin nature. At the moment of resurrection the flesh with its sin nature will be eradicated. Next week we’ll pick up in verse 4.

ⁱTom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Ro 6:6.

ⁱⁱTom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).

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