

# The Old Man Crucified & the Body of Sin Destroyed

*Studies in Romans*

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**Bible Text:** Romans 6:6-7  
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Continuing our studies in the book of Romans, we read again the first seven verses of Romans chapter six, Romans chapter six, reading the first seven verses. And tonight we will be paying attention particularly to verses six and seven.

Contrary to my initial plan, I am going through Romans 6 a lot more slowly than I anticipated. And I am doing that simply because there is so much here that people have taken for granted. They think they have been taught what Romans 6 means but many have heard a fairly shoddy exposition of this passage with the result that they live in a state of bondage and defeat.

This is a key chapter. This is—as you Americans say—where the rubber meets the road, where the doctrine of our justification and union with Christ affects our everyday manner of living. It shows the effect of our justification in holy living and how we relate to sin in the world and in the body. Paul takes us through this in some detail in Romans 6. He will deal with the same issue from a different aspect in chapter seven. It is a very big subject and so I decided I would slow up a little and rather than consider Romans six in two or three messages, I thought we would need to give it quite a bit of extra attention.

Let's read the first seven verses together.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Amen. The Lord will add his blessing to the reading of his Word for his name's sake.

First, a quick recap—especially for those who have not been with us for our earlier studies. Romans 6 starts with a question by which Paul intends to answer a certain objection to his doctrine. He has climaxed the wonderful teaching of the fifth chapter of Romans with the statement that where sin abounded, grace super-abounded. It did much more abound. Immediately, he took note of a common objection: “If more sin means all the more grace, are you not saying, let us sin in order that grace may abound?” His answer to that is, “God forbid.” Far be it from us. Let it never be. “God forbid. How shall we who died to sin...” It is not speaking so much of the sin of being dead, though obviously that that naturally follows from the action of dying. But the emphasis is upon this act that took place sometime in the past. How shall we, we above all people, who died to sin continue to live in sin? That was a sufficient answer, but Paul takes up and, as it were, he uses as a multi faceted diamond that he turns around to let the line shine on it from different aspects. So he will continue answering this abominable charge that the gospel of a free justification and of absolute security for the justified in Jesus Christ means that we can live in whatever way we like, especially if we like to live in sin—and that the grace of God will be all the more glorified thereby.

We have already looked at verses three through five under the general of dead and alive. Now we come to verses six and seven where he says: “Knowing this, that our old man is [or was] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” If you have got a marginal reference in your Bible you will see that it gives give you the literal translation of the Greek text and I see no reason to depart from this uniform meaning of the term: “He that died is(or rather, has been) justified from sin.”

In verse 5 Paul has just announced the glorious truth that we shall be in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection. It is a wonderful and assured statement. We shall be in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection. Later in the epistle, in Romans chapter eight and verse 30, Paul will make the same point in slightly different language: “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” In both cases the apostle’s intention is to convey certainty. And the certainty of the truth announced in chapter six verse five that we shall be in the likeness of his resurrection depends on the reality of the truth announced in verse six where he says, “We know this, that our old man was crucified with him.”

These are truly amazing and wonderful words. Properly understood they lay the foundation for everything that Paul is going to say in the rest of Romans chapters 6 and 7. Properly understood they are words of liberating power in the life of a Christian. I don’t think it is going too far to say that they put in the hand of the Christian the golden key as to how to live—not just exist, but live; live with who he is and what he is; live in the real world and yet live in the light of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Properly understood, therefore, these are words of immense significance and of wondrous, liberating power.

Misunderstood, however, as they all too often are, these words seem to be nothing more than the meanderings of a mystical mind far divorced from the real life struggles of ordinary believers. Now understand what I am saying. You must carefully grasp what I am saying. I am not saying these are the meanderings of a mystical mind. I am denying

that. What I am saying is that if you interpret this passage as it is all too often presented to God's people, you will feel it to be so divorced from reality that it looks just like mysticism of a kind that we can never appreciate or experience.

“We shall be in the likeness of his resurrection.” In other words, in our present state we shall enjoy the spiritual benefits and power of the resurrection of Christ. We shall live in the here and now with the benefits and the power of Christ's resurrection. We are not yet in the resurrection—at least physically—but we are in the *likeness* of that resurrection. However, there is a promise here that goes much beyond the current state. And that is that in the ages to come we will enter fully into the triumph of Christ over death and hell as we are perfectly glorified and experience what Paul terms “the adoption, the redemption of our body” (8:23).

How do we know this? It is easy to say this is true, but how do we know it? How can we be so sure of it? The answer Paul gives throughout this entire section of the book of Romans is that Christ is our security. Our security as Christians does not rest in the frame of mind in which we happen to be when we get up in the morning. It does not lie in some particular aspect of our experience. You should be very careful about making your eternal state dependent upon a transitory mood. You may have wonderful emotional, even religious, experiences and be under the wrath of God. You will recall that one of the most joyous times in the history of Israel was when David sent for the ark of the covenant to bring it up to Jerusalem. He and his people had an exciting religious experience. All along the road they were singing and dancing. They were in wonderful fettle. You would have imagined from their religious experience that they were in the height of blessing and that God was with them. Well, he was with them, but he was with them in anger but He was in them in judgment and as soon as Uzzah put his hand to the ark that was rocking on the cart in which it was being carried, God smote him. David was shocked, dismayed and angry, but he had no right to be angry. Despite all the emotion and the religious drama of the occasion the solemn fact is that David and his helpers were acting in breach of God's law—and they suffered the consequences, despite their euphoria. It is a very foolish thing to imagine from some euphoric experience that you have security.

Our security needs an absolute basis and that basis is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how Paul argues throughout this portion of the book of Romans. The Lord Jesus died. The Lord Jesus rose again. He had promised His disciples, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). Here in Romans 6 the apostle Paul demonstrates for us the formal basis on which that promise of the Saviour rests because. He says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, [in order] that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, because he that died has been justified from sin.”

Tonight I want us to think about *the old man crucified and the body of sin destroyed*.

In this passage of Scripture we encounter some terms that are of far reaching importance, terms that have been, I think, largely obscured in most of the interpretations men have given them. The “old man” is one such term. “The body of sin” is another. So we must carefully consider these expressions.

## I The Old Man Identified

The first thing I want us to do is to identify the old man. Paul says, “Our old man was crucified with Christ.” We must ask the question: Who or what is the old man? That sounds a very simple question. Unfortunately, the answers don’t come quite so simply. In answering it I am going to mention something that I believe most of you can immediately identify with. Most of us have grown up with the idea that a believer is a man with two natures, the old nature and the new nature. Have you heard that? I think you have heard that when you came to Christ you received a new nature and now while you are in the body you have two natures, the old one you were born with and the new nature you received when you came to Christ. You have heard that the old nature and the new nature correspond respectively to what the Bible calls “the old man” and “the new man.” I think this depicts a Christian as a spiritual schizophrenic or someone with a multiple personality disorder! He is a man with two natures. It has been described like this: it is as if a Christian has two dogs in him, a black dog and a white dog. The white dog is nice and placid and kind, fetches your paper for you, makes your coffee and all the rest of it. The black dog is a big, bad, savage brute. These, we are told, are the two natures of a Christian, vying for dominance in him, and the outcome depends on which dog he feeds.

I am going to try to refute this two-nature theory. But I confess that we run into an immediate difficulty. Every believer knows that there are two principles at work in every him. The Bible speaks of the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. So undoubtedly there are two conflicting principles at work in a Christian. However, it is my contention that you have only one *nature*. Furthermore, it is my contention that when you talk about the old nature and the new nature and equate them with the old man and the new man, you make a mistake that will cause you insoluble problems. If you equate the old man and old nature you equate it with the “flesh.” That is how some people understand Romans 6. They maintain that the old man is the flesh, the old nature that still lives in the Christian.

Some people take a slightly different view. Without adopting the two-nature theory, they will say, “The old man is the flesh. The old man is a term that signifies all the corruption of your nature.”

Some take 2 Corinthians 4:16, where Paul speaks of the outward man perishing and the inward man being renewed day by day, as meaning that the old man is synonymous with the outward man and the new man with the inward man.

There is something fundamentally wrong with all those explanations. The insurmountable difficulty that each of them encounters and it is this. Paul tells us in our text that the old man was crucified. And there is no resurrection for him. The old man *was crucified*—not is being, not we hope will be, but was crucified—with Christ. So any interpretation that speaks of the old man as yet surviving in the Christian obviously contradicts what Paul is

saying. To speak about the old man perishing at a later date, runs contrary to what Paul's whole argument.

Now here we come to a most important issue: to instruct Christians that it is their duty to crucify the old man or instruct Christians that they should starve out the old man, is to tell them do something that is utterly impossible. To make them believe that their sanctification and experience of victory over sin depends on their doing what the Bible declares they cannot possibly do is to condemn them to spending their lives pursuing an experience something that the Bible says is an absolute, utter, and total impossibility.

All around us Christians are struggling. They ask, "How can I crucify the old man?" The Word of God says, in effect, "What are you talking about? The old man was crucified long ago." Now, I know that for many people that sounds almost revolutionary. To some it will sound unscriptural for they will at once think of a couple of texts that at first blush seem to contradict what I have just said.

There are only two other places in the New Testament where Paul speaks about the old man. They are usually quoted to oppose what I am proposing. So let's look carefully to see if indeed they undermine the point I am making from Romans 6.

The first passage is in Ephesians 4: 22: "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

The second passage is in Colossians 3:9: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

As I say, these texts are usually quoted to prove that the old man is not really dead, that whatever Paul meant in Romans six he didn't mean that the old man was actually put to death never to be raised again, but that somehow the old man has merely been subdued and must be kept subdued.

However, when you read Romans 6 there is no way around the fact that Paul said the old man died. Now, it is not difficult to understand the statement, though the theology it conveys is profound. There is a rule of interpretation in Scripture that says that we should always interpret either what is difficult by what is simply stated on the same subject; or interpret a secondary reference to a term by the primary reference to it. Romans 6 provides the primary reference to "the old man." This is the primary theological reference to the term in the New Testament and it says that the old man died. He was crucified.

Now let's look at the two texts in Ephesians and Colossians. On examination we discover that they do not in any way contradict what I have said about Romans 6. In fact, they strongly support it.

First, take Colossians 3:9. It says, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." A rougher but more literal rendering is, "Lie not one to another, having put off the [having put off completely] from yourselves the old man with his

deeds.” I don’t want to bore you with technicalities, but both these texts show you the exactness of biblical inspiration and they will show you with what care the apostle chose even the tense of the verb in which he was expressing his thought. This participle, “having put off from yourselves,” conveys for us an action that not only began in the past but was completed in the past. Isn’t that exactly what Paul is saying in Romans 6? The old man died. To change the wording slightly, in Colossians 3:9 Paul said, “Once and for all he was put away.” Why does he say this? Because the old man was crucified. And, therefore, the argument is, “Your old man died and that truth must control your conduct. So don’t lie one to another.”

It is interesting to note what Paul says in Colossians 3:8: “But now ye also put off all these.” Here he uses an imperative. This is something we are commanded to do. “Put off ...anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. [And do not] lie...to another.” Why? The inference is unavoidable: “Because you have in the past by faith in Jesus Christ once and for all put off the old man.” The old man was crucified. Colossians 3 doesn’t change what Paul says in Romans 6. It supports it, as you would expect.

Turning to Ephesians 4 we find that the very same thing holds true. Let’s read the whole section, verse 20 to 24. “But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

A cursory glance the English translation would lead you to believe that there are three commands: First, put off the old man. Secondly, be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And, thirdly, put on the new man. You would think those were three distinct commands, but you would be mistaken. Follow carefully. Paul says, “If you know the truth as it is in Jesus.” Now what is the truth that is in Jesus? Paul spells it out carefully in the words that follow—and make sure to pay attention to how he uses the tenses of the verbs:

This is the truth that is in Jesus: “That you utterly put off the old man and put on the new (both actions begun and completed in the past) to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Now let me repeat that. “You have utterly, once and for, all put off the old man and you have once and for all put on the new man.” That is what he is saying—and it is exactly what he is teaching in Romans chapter six. The old man was crucified. That is when the new man came into existence. And those are once and for all occurrences. The result is that you are now being renewed—an ongoing experience—in the spirit of your mind.

So what, then, is the old man? Well, the clue is that the old man no longer lives. He no longer exists in a believer. This is a one-time, irreversible act of the grace of God that denotes a fundamental change in the status of a person from death and condemnation to life and acceptance with God. And that is what points us in the right direction.

The great fictional detective Sherlock Holmes said, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, is the solution.” That is simple logic, is it not? We have dealt with the impossible. Now, then, what is the solution? Remember—and I know this sounds so inane it doesn’t need to be said, but we do need to be reminded of it—remember that when the Bible was written it didn’t have chapter divisions. There was no break between Romans 5:21 and 6:1. The verse that controls the argument of this entire section of Romans is 5:12: “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in that [because] all...sinned.” That’s what Paul wrote. Death passed upon all men because in Adam all sinned.

I am not going to repeat the exposition of Romans 5, but we should never forget that something happened “in Adam.” God said to him, “In the day that thou eatest [of the forbidden fruit] thou shalt surely die.” Adam ate and the sentence went into operation. Now Paul tells us that by Adam sin entered the world and death by sin and death passed through upon us: we sinned in him and died with him. Now let us ask again, What is the old man? The old man is what I was in Adam. That’s the old man.

The word that is used for “old” is interesting. There are two words available to express the idea of “old.” If you think of English words such as “archaeology,” you will find that they begin with one of these Greek terms. It comes from the word that means the beginning. It is interesting that that is *not* the word that is used here. Rather Paul uses another word, a word that depicts something old and worn out. I emphasize this for, you see, the old man does not go back all the way to the beginning. When God created Adam he created him sinless, spotless, pure and holy. And that is how *we* were created in Adam. But Adam fell and we sinned in him and fell with him. The old man dates all the way to Adam’s fall. It is our fallen state in him, partaking of his guilt and coming under his condemnation. This is the old man.

“The old man.” What a description of what we were in Adam. In Romans 5:14 we read, “Death reigned.” In verse 21, “Sin reigned unto death.” That describes our person and our position in Adam. In him we sinned. In him we died unto God.

But, listen. That was all changed by the Lord Jesus Christ. So here is the old man identified. What is my old man? It is not some “old nature” that is still with me. My old man is what I was legally in the sight of God in Adam. That’s the old man identified.

That enables me to be fairly brief with the next point:

## **II The Old Man Crucified**

Here is the good news: the old man—my being in Adam—was once and for all slain with Jesus Christ on the cross. Now think of this. Not only did the Lord Jesus Christ suffer the penalty of our sin (which is a wonderful truth, but since He and His people are one and indivisible in the covenant of grace, in Him our old man suffered the full penalty of sin once and for all. Not that we actually did the suffering—we covered this last week. We didn’t have to do the suffering. We were planted “in the likeness of Christ’s death;” we were implanted with Him in the likeness of His death. That was a purely forensic act

of God. Without our contributing a thing, paying anything of the price the old man was put to death to the law and to its penalty, to sin and to its reign and tyranny—put to death once and forever, never to be raised again.

Now it is vital for us to realize this—and it is equally vital for all of us who are saved to stop believing that we are called of God to do what the Scripture says is impossible. Those who make the old man mean the flesh, “the old, carnal nature,” put believers under a binding guilt. Maybe you yourself have felt it. You see, if God were to say to you—emphasize the *if*, because He does no such thing—but if God were to say to you, “Put your old man to death,” He would be commanding you to eradicate the flesh or let Him do it for you. That is precisely what many so-called “holiness preachers” have been telling people for years. Put the flesh to death; make it a corpse. Like a corpse, you should be unresponsive to any carnal stimulation.” As a result, when they continue to feel the stirrings of the flesh many feel guilty. By feeling any reaction to temptation or carnal stimulation they prove that they are not really succeeding in making themselves like corpses as far as sin is concerned. And since they believe God has commanded them to put the flesh to death, they conclude that they are living in perpetual disobedience to Him.

The problem with all this is that not only is it unscriptural but it targets the most sincere and the most vulnerable of God’s people. I have seen sincere Christians reduced to living lives of guilty failure. Of course, they haven’t been failures at all, except in this: they have failed in their attempts to do what the Bible never commands us to do, what is impossible for us to do.

The Bible says your old man was crucified. It doesn’t *ever* tell you to crucify the old man. There is no command in the New Testament for you to crucify the old man. There is a wonderful revelation that said that God crucified the old man with Christ at Calvary . And realizing this will do two things. It will show you how you can be sure of the wonderful truth of verse five that we shall be in the likeness of his resurrection and that will lay the foundation for true holiness in your life. For immediately we move to the third point where Paul goes on to state God’s purpose in crucifying the old man. We have considered the old man identified and the old man crucified. Now we come to

### **The Body of Sin Nullified**

“Nullified.” Notice the word, for it is an important word: the body of sin nullified. Why was the old man crucified with Christ? Paul gives us the answer: “That or in order that “the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Now here is the purpose and the product of the death of the old man. Once again, we have a couple of difficult terms to deal with. First, “the body of sin.” What is the body of sin? And second, we have the word “destroyed.” What is the meaning of the word that is translated “destroyed?” These are big issues and I am, therefore, going to cut through a lot of varying opinions to get at the truth.

### **The Definition of “the Body of Sin”**



Some people say “the body of sin” simply means sin in itself. It is a circumlocution, a roundabout way of saying sin itself. Charles Hodge, one of the greatest of all commentators on Romans, says that “the body of sin” is only another name for the old man. The phrase is figurative. Sin is personified. The body of sin is considered as a body, as something which can be crucified. So according to Hodge, “the body of sin” is the old man. And it is described as a body as if God were personifying it in order to say, “Crucify it.” Robert Haldane, along with Hodge the premier exponent or exegete in the book of Romans, agrees. He says, “The body of sin is sin embodied,” meaning the whole combination and strength of corruption as having all its members joined into a perfect body. So this is a figure of speech that treats sin as a body. It is really sin in itself and you are to picture it as some sort of body. John Calvin says, “The body of sin does not mean flesh and bones, but the corrupted mass. For man left to his own nature is a mass made up of sin.” So, to him, the body of sin means the mass of sin, the mass of corruption and that is the explanation that many commentators and preachers take today.

To be quite honest, I dismiss all of those things, not because I know more than these eminent scholars but for self evident reasons. John Murray, the great Scottish theologian who for years taught theology at Westminster Seminary gives a much better exposition. He says, “There is no need, however, to resort to such figurative interpretation. ‘Body’ can well refer in this case to the physical organism.” What I am going to try and prove to you is that when Paul speaks of “the body of sin,” he is talking about our actual, physical body.

I think that is clear from the context. When he goes on (verse 12) to talk about the body he terms it “your mortal body.” That is the actual, physical body. In verses 13 and 19 he is talking about “your members,” the actual members of your physical body. When you look at the rest of the book of Romans—in chapter eight verses 10 and 11 and 13 and 23 and then chapter 12 and verse one—whenever he uses this word “body” he means the literal physical body. So in the context of Romans 6 there is nothing that would lead me to believe that he is speaking of anything else. “The body of sin” is a reference to your physical body.

I would put it this way, that the body of sin is equivalent to what the New Testament terms “the flesh,” not because the body is made up of flesh, but in the sense that the flesh means corruption, the corruption of sin as it tyrannizes the body and very particularly as it makes use of the body and its members, as Romans six puts it, to become instruments—the literal word is *weapons*—for the prosecution of sin. So “the body of sin” is speaking of your literal body as it is affected by sin and as it becomes the instrument for sin.

Now what is the problem with that? What Some people object to this interpretation and say, “That sounds very like the old Gnostic heresy that the body is material therefore it is evil. It is sinful because it is a body.” No, no. That is not so. The body is not sinful simply because it is made out of material. Adam was created with a physical human body, but he had no sin. Sin does not reside in the body because of its material nature, but

sin can make use of the body. That is what Paul is talking about here. To this Hodge adds the objection, “To make the body of sin mean the physical body would mean that Christ’s object in dying was to destroy the body because here it is to destroy the body of sin.” His argument is, of course, that this is nonsense. Christ didn’t come to destroy the body. But Hodge’s logic is faulty at this point.

What Paul is saying here is something very profound and yet very simple. And we all know this. You see, this is where Paul’s great theology comes down to touch you and me where we actually live. This gets to where we are. The body is the peculiar vehicle that sin uses and that is easily ruled by sin. And the body—and the New Testament is very clear on this—is the part of you that has not yet entered upon the full deliverance that Christ purchased for it at Calvary. Do you understand that?

Charismatics and Pentecostals, defending their healing techniques which have no basis whatsoever in the New Testament will say, “Did not Christ bear our sicknesses as well as our sins?” Sure he did. I’ll not give up that doctrine to a Pentecostalist or to a Charismatic. Sure he did. Is healing in the atonement? Sure it is.

But, you know, Pentecostals still die. Did you ever notice that? They still die because the time for the body to enter into all that Christ purchased at Calvary has not yet come, but yet Paul can say in Ephesians two that we, not our bodies, but we, the new man in Christ, we are already sitting with Christ in heaven. We are glorified in him. Everyone that he justified, he glorified, past tense (Romans 8:30). In other words, when a man is in Christ, the accomplishment of His salvation is all done. He is in Christ. He is in glory. Here and now. That is his security.

Paul gives the answer, by the way, to the saved today and lost tomorrow crowd. You could as soon take Christ from the throne of glory and drop him into hell as take one who is in Christ on the throne of glory and drop him into hell. But the body is not there. Some of you who are seated with Christ in the heavenlies are now inhabiting bodies that are racked with pain and suffering. You are “in the heavenlies” but the body is not yet there. Some of you are also struggling with the body as the instrument of sin, of sin that would come to tyrannize that body. Oh, the day is coming, thank God, very soon, when the body will be free, not only from pain, but from sin. For the ultimate purpose of Christ’s death, as we shall now see, is that the body of sin shall be destroyed. In the meantime, however, it must be mortified.

The body of sin defined. He is talking about your body as it may be used as a weapon by sin.

### The Destruction of the Body of Sin

What does it mean the body of sin “destroyed?” Let me make the statement right away that the verb here does not mean to annihilate or to exterminate or to eradicate. It is a very difficult verb. It occurs 27 times in the New Testament and, 26 of the 27 occurrences are by Paul. Once the word appears in the gospel of Luke. Leon Morris notes that there

are 17 different translations of this one verb in the Authorized Version. And in 1881 when the Revised Version came out they were going to make things oh so simple. Well, they got rid of some variations in the translation of this word but then they added some more—so they ended up with 12 different ways of translating this. And Morris says that he examined a lot of reputable translations or versions as they have rendered this into English and he traced over 80 different ways in which this one verb was translated.

In this case the etymology, not always a guide to meaning, is definitive. The basic word in this verb is the word for work. There is a prefix put in front of it which means “no work.” And then there is yet another prefix which intensifies the whole thing and it is put together as a verb and it means literally “to do absolutely no work.” It came, therefore, to mean “to render inoperative,” “to put out of use” or, the word that I have chosen, “to nullify.” For example in Romans 3:3 we read, “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” Shall it nullify God’s faithfulness? Obviously not. Romans 3:31 asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith?” By the gospel of justifying faith, do we nullify the law? Do we deprive the law of its proper place and function? No.

Let me give you another example. In 2 Timothy 1:10, we read that our Lord Jesus Christ “hath abolished [same word] death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” This is a very important reference. When he died, did the Lord Jesus Christ eradicate physical death? No. As I have indicated, Christians still die. You are going to die if Christ doesn’t come before that. You are going to die. I am going to die. But Christ abolished death. The idea is that he *nullified* it as to its nature as a condemning force. So that we can say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Christ has nullified it. He has rendered it inoperative as a vehicle of condemnation. It is now for a Christian the gateway to glory. Sometimes it is a gateway that is attended by things as they would hurl at us every fiery dart. But nonetheless it is the gateway straight into glory.

“The Lord Jesus Christ likewise, took part of flesh and blood.” *Likewise* means, “like us” He partook of flesh and blood “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15). That is the great purpose of God’s crucifying the old man. It is that the body may be utterly and irrevocably removed from the tyranny of sin so as never again to be used as an instrument of sin. And, believer, that is the prospect that lies before you and me.

Turn with me, quickly, to Romans 8:19-23. “For the earnest expectation of the creature...” The creature here is the whole of creation, “...waiteth for the manifestation,” [or the revelation] “of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have

the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

What is this “manifestation of the sons of God?” Paul describes it beautifully in Philippians 3:21 when he says the Lord Jesus Christ, “shall change our vile body [literally, the body of our humiliation.]” He will change this body that has been tyrannized by sin. He will change this body that has so often been the vehicle and the instrument of sin. And he will make it “like unto his glorious body.”

Now having this prospect, believers can never say, as the objector in Romans 6:1 insinuates, “Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.” No, because the prospect imposes a present duty. You may remember that in 1 John 3:3, We are told, “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Here a future prospect is revealed to us in order to set us upon our present duty. And that is what Paul teaches in Romans 6:12-13: “Let not sin therefore rule [or reign] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”

This is our duty. But it is more than a duty. This carries with it the present power to be holy. Look at the end of verse six. “Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth [no longer] should we serve [be slaves to] sin.” What does it mean to be a slave to sin? Let’s back up to what I was expounding at the beginning of the chapter. It is living in sin as your natural element. That is something the new man can never do. And this is the result of the old man crucified.

Now we come to the final great statement in Romans six verse seven. We have seen the old man identified, the old man crucified, the body of sin nullified. And now we come to

### **The New Man Justified**

“He that died is [has been] justified from sin.” Paul’s teaching here is, “The old man died, therefore, I am a new man in Christ; and I have been justified from sin.” That is a beautiful expression. Paul uses it in Acts 13:39: “And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” What does it mean “justified from sin”? Look at the wording. “He that died has been justified from sin.” I think our translators used the expression “freed from sin” for a very simple reason. And there is a wonderful truth here. We are freed from sin. But I think that the full truth is so much more than this.

Imagine that a criminal is indicted for his crimes. The law has a list of charges to bring against him. He is guilty. Death row is ready to receive him. Then he dies. And as soon as he dies he is beyond the reach of the law. He is freed from it. That is part of the message of Romans 6:7. He that died with Christ is beyond the reach of the law’s condemnation. But the truth goes far beyond that: he is absolved from all sin; and even more than that, he is accepted and rewarded as righteous in God’s sight because of his new union with

Christ and on the basis of Christ's righteousness imputed to him. That is the glorious statement the new man is justified from sin.

Now, in the light of all this you will see that the objection of verse one is absolutely absurd. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" The answer is sufficient. "How shall we..." (and remember what I said: the emphasis is on the *we*)... how shall we, of all people, we who are new men in Christ, justified fully and freely from sin, whose very bodies are soon to be glorified, to be made like unto the glorious body of Christ and incapable of being instruments of sin—how shall we who of all men have the motivation and the power to overcome sin—how shall we live carelessly in sin and make grace an excuse for wickedness?

The very thought is absurd. Sin is now an intruder. Sin is now a usurper. It is no longer our rightful king. It is no longer the monarch under whom we willingly live. It is an intruder, a usurper and we live in the light of that glorious day when our sanctification will be as complete as our justification as regards our body as well as our soul, and body and soul we shall be with Christ forever. Then the very presence of sin, the very ability of sin to attract and to tempt will be gone forever.

We have a great Savior and we have a glorious salvation. Let us know this. It is imperative that we know. I pointed out in the overview of Romans 6:1-14 the controlling words *know*, *reckon* and *yield*. Let us know this, that the old man was crucified with Christ and there is no resurrection for him. Let us know that the purpose of this is that the body of sin ultimately would be made inoperative, no longer capable of serving sin and that in the meantime that we should have the power to mortify the deeds of the flesh, the deeds of the body and live as new men in Jesus Christ.