

AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF ROMANS 6:6

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of  
New Testament Literature and Exegesis  
Dallas Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Theology

AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF ROMANS 6:6

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1978 Henry C. Thiessen New Testament Award

Dallas Theological Seminary

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **The Need for this Study**

God desires every child of His to be holy. This is clearly expressed at least three times in the New Testament as follows: "... He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph. 1:4). "... For this is the will of God, your sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3). "... You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1Pet. 1:16). Because holy living is such a high priority to God the Christian is compelled to understand the doctrine of sanctification, both as regarding the process of being made holy as well as the position for all those who have placed their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

#### *1. The Importance of Romans 6:6 to the Doctrine of Sanctification*

Throughout the history of the church numerous Bible scholars, as well as some missionaries, have emphasized Romans 6:1-14, and, in particular, Romans 6:6, as not only basic to the understanding of the doctrine of sanctification but also fundamental as the basis upon which this doctrine rests. One contemporary scholar observes the following:

In the first fourteen verses of chapter six, Paul discusses the basis of sanctification as union with Christ in death and resurrection. In verse 6, the key verse of the section, the apostle speaks of the crucifixion of the old man as a past fact so that the body of sin might be annulled.<sup>1</sup>

Other commentators, referring to the union of the believer with Christ, have similarly concluded that: "... The essential condition of spiritual power is union with Christ;"<sup>2</sup> "...

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<sup>1</sup>S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "A Survey of Biblical Psychology in the Epistle to the Romans" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1949), pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup>Evan H. Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty, and the Spiritual Life*. (Fort Washington, Pa.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1952), p. 85.

identification with Christ is the most profound truth in the New Testament.”<sup>3</sup> “... I do not know of any doctrine that is more comforting or more helpful to the child of God than the scriptural doctrine of co-crucifixion with Christ.”<sup>4</sup> The written testimony of Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, confirms the importance of the doctrine of union with Christ described in Romans 6:1-14. He wrote as follows:

I prayed, agonized, fasted, strove, made resolutions, read the Word more diligently, sought more time for meditation, but all without avail. Every day, almost every hour, the consciousness of sin oppressed me... I thought that holiness was to be gradually attained by diligent use of the means of grace... When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the spirit of God revealed to me the truth of our oneness with Jesus...<sup>5</sup>

Other writers, including the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, have related the importance of these verses to the doctrine of sanctification. Chafer wrote: “This passage is the key to the possibility of a ‘walk in the Spirit.’”<sup>6</sup> Another noted Bible teacher summarizes the importance of Romans 6:1-14 as follows: “When this great portion of the epistle is understood and acted upon, schools of teaching on sanctification will disappear and the Christian will live his life on the God-appointed level.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>W. Graham Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953-70), 3:139-40.

<sup>4</sup>Dwight J. Pentecost, Designed to Be Like Him (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup>Howard Taylor, Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret (Chicago: Moody Press, 1932), pp. 158-60.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, He That is Spiritual (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1918. reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 120.

<sup>7</sup>W. Graham Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953-70), 3:139-40.

A church leader in China wrote these words: “Romans six lays the foundation for the Christian deliverance from sin.”<sup>8</sup> The significance of verse six to Romans chapter six and the doctrine of sanctification is observed by one Australian commentator who wrote as follows: “Undoubtedly Romans 6:6 has been the main battlefield in the disagreement of holiness theories.”<sup>9</sup>

From these remarks by scholars, missionaries, and Christian leaders around the world we can conclude that an understanding of Romans 6:6 is vital, not only to comprehend the doctrine of sanctification but also to living the Christian life.

## *2. The Present-Day Confusion over the Doctrine of Sanctification*

A variety of views face the modern Christian concerning the spiritual life. One writer, after researching the current theories, observes the following:

The Christian Church is exposed to a plethora of approaches that go far beyond a simple difference in terminology and reflect a basic disagreement in what the Scriptures teach on the subject of sanctification. For example, among the popular approaches, there is ... sanctification by emotionalism, sanctification by self-renunciation, sanctification by confession, sanctification by ‘filling by faith,’ sanctification by legalism, sanctification by ‘reckoning,’ and sanctification by Transaction Analysis.<sup>10</sup>

In light of the significance of the subject as the basis for fruitful Christian living as well as because of the confusion among Christians in our day, a careful exegesis and theological study are warranted. It is vital for living an abundant life, full of purpose,

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<sup>8</sup>Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 3 vols. (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., 1968), 1:133.

<sup>9</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, *A New Call to Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 73.

<sup>10</sup>Lawrence E. Finch, “A Critique of Warfield's Concept of Sanctification in the Light of Romans 6-8” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 1-2.

potential, and joy as God intended. Romans 6:6 provides a compelling life principle for every Christian rooted in the foundational truth that we have been united with Christ.

### *3. The Importance of the Doctrine of Identification to Christian Counseling*

In recent years truths related to Romans 6:1-14 have been referenced increasingly in counseling situations with considerable success. For example, Charles R. Solomon incorporated Grace Fellowship International on May 29, 1969, as a counseling ministry to Christians. As a result of learning and experiencing the truth of identification with Christ, he was so greatly helped with his psychological problems that he left a prestigious position in the industry to offer counsel to other Christians.<sup>11</sup> His two first books describe the scriptural basis of his counseling approach which assumes that the basic premise the person who meets our needs is the Lord Jesus Christ -- not a human therapist. He calls the discipline "Spirituotherapy."<sup>12</sup> He records twenty-three cases in which people with serious mental problems have been helped.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Approach to the Thesis**

In chapter one, I reflect on the need for and approach to the thesis. In chapter II the central verse of the thesis, Romans 6:6, is considered, in the light of Paul's letter to the Christian Church in Rome. Paul hoped to visit the congregation for the first time on his way to Spain. In chapter 3, Romans 6:6 is studied in greater depth within the context of Romans 6:1-14, the section of the letter related to Paul's argument. In chapter 4, Romans 6:6 is

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<sup>11</sup>Charles R. Solomon, The Ins, and Out of Rejection (Denver, Colo.: Heritage House Publishers, 1976), p. 106.

<sup>12</sup>Charles R. Solomon, Handbook to Happiness (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1971), p. 15.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 127-37.



exegeted with special attention to the immediate context and meaning of the determinative clauses and words.

In the final chapter, the historical, contextual, and lexical considerations about the phrase, “our old man,” are studied to understand the meaning of the phrase “to put to death ‘our old man.’” The theological implications of the study are presented in chapter 6, particularly, as they relate to the doctrine of sanctification and its essential role in the life of every Christian and the process of counseling of other people.

CHAPTER II  
ROMANS 6:6 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Because Paul's argument in Romans 6:6 fits into the argument of the entire Epistle to the Romans, it is vital to examine the occasion as well as the argument of the Epistle as a whole. Paul uses argumentation in many of his writings as a preferred use of discourse to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses he adheres to. However, although the arguments are more evident with most of the other New Testament epistles this is not so with Paul's letter to the Romans. At the core, Paul's argument in Romans is that the death of Jesus began a fundamentally new covenant relationship between human beings and their Creator, whether Jews or Gentiles.

As regards background, the apostle Paul is the uncontested author. He was probably writing from Corinth as suggested by his reference to his host Gaius of Corinth (Rom. 16:23, 1 Cor. 1:14). Paul stayed in Corinth for three months on his third missionary journey, and the letter was probably written between A.D. 55<sup>14</sup> and A.D. 58<sup>15</sup> (Acts 20:3).

**Romans as a Letter of Self-Introduction**

Some scholars hold that Paul wrote the letter to introduce himself and the gospel to the Christians in Rome to prepare for his future mission to Spain. The Roman

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<sup>14</sup>C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 5th ed. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1902), p xiii.

church would be used as a base of operation. The main objection to this view is that it is not consistent with Paul's other letters. He did not outline his gospel for approval of his Christian readers (Gal.1:8). Nor would his gospel be unknown to the Roman Christians after he had been an apostle to the Gentiles for so many years.

### **Romans as a Pledge of Confidence in the Gospel**

This perspective holds that Paul, having long planned to go to Rome, yet deciding to go to Jerusalem instead, wrote the letter to assure the Roman Church that the postponing of his visit to Rome was not because he had lost faith in the gospel. Paul's affirmation of confidence in the gospel to make his point is expressed in Romans 1:16. "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

### **Romans as a Circular Letter**

This position gained support following the work of T. W. Manson.<sup>16</sup> In this view, Romans is understood as a summarizing of Paul's theological positions following the various controversies and ten years of teaching and ministry. Though addressed primarily to the Romans, it was also to be circulated among the other churches. This interpretation does not adequately explain why Paul wrote the letter to Rome. Besides, Romans 13:1-7, regarding governing authorities, related to the specific situation of the Roman Church and would not be as relevant to other churches.

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<sup>16</sup>T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans--and Others," The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 31 (Autumn 1948):224-40.

## **Romans as a Letter to Deal with the animosity between Jew and Gentile in the Church in Rome**

In this view, proposed by W. S. Campbell<sup>17</sup> and held by P. R. Williams,<sup>18</sup> the letter was addressed to the Roman Church because of a specific problem that they had. A division had arisen between the Gentile majority of the church who were unwilling to have fellowship with the more conservative Jewish minority.

The death of Christ led to the initiation of a new covenant relationship between human beings and their creator, whether they were Jew or Gentile. The disunity between Jew and Gentile provided a good reason for Paul's writing to the church in Rome. Paul's argument in the letter is that the righteous purpose of God for both Jew and Gentile is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

For Jews and Gentiles alike, salvation is an act of God's mercy, which is extended to whomever he chooses (Rom. 9:18). This interpretation provides the basis for the inclusion of chapters 9-11 in the epistle. To counteract the animosity between Jew and Gentile Paul stresses both the equality of the two groups and explains the differences between the two groups in God's overall purpose. In the key verse of the book, Paul affirms that the condition for righteousness and salvation is the same for both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1:16-17).

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<sup>17</sup>W.S. Campbell," Why Did Paul Write Romans?" Expository Times 85 (June 1974):244-69.

<sup>18</sup>P. R. Williams," Paul's Purpose in Writing Romans," Bibliotheca Sacra 128 (January-March 1971):62-67.

From 1:18--3:20 Paul establishes the fact that the two groups are equally under sin. The guilt of the Gentiles is demonstrated in 1:18-32 and the guilt of the Jews in 2:1--3:8. Though there are certain advantages to being a Jew, 3:1-8, their lack of responsibility concerning these advantages means that they have no special claim before God. Both Jews and non-Jews are under sin (Rom. 3:9-20). In the second section of the epistle, the apostle shows that salvation for both Jew and Gentile is by faith in the substitutionary work of Christ as an offering for sin (Rom. 3:21-5:21). This is explained in Romans 3:27-31 and illustrated from the life of Abraham, the father of the Jews, in 4:1-25. Paul reasons that since Abraham is the father of all believers there should be no division in the church (Rom. 4:16).

In the third section of the Book of Romans, Paul makes a convincing case that a right relationship with God is experienced in the same way by both Jew and Gentile. There is no advantage either for the Jew or the Gentile. The basis of sanctification in the process of becoming more like Christ in our conduct and character and being set apart for God for His use is clarified in Romans chapter six. Sanctification is rooted in the union of the believer with Jesus Christ as Paul reminds us over and over again by his repeated use of the phrase "in Christ" or "through Christ." Paul further explains that the experiential reality gained from a Christian's personal experience does not come about by the working of the flesh (chapter seven), but by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit (chapter eight).

In the fourth section of Paul's letter to the church in Rome, as recorded in Romans 9-11, he addresses the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians. He explains God's righteous purpose in His sovereign election and dealings with the Jews. The Roman Gentiles should not be proud and think that they have replaced the Jews in God's divine purpose, for the following reasons: first, they have been grafted into Abraham, the primary trunk of the Jews as the first Patriarch of the Jewish people (11:8); second, Paul's mission, as was

Christ's is both to Jew and Gentile (11:13; 15:8); and third, the hardening of Israel is both partial as well as temporary (11:25).

In the last main section of his letter to the church in Rome, dealing with Christian service, Paul stresses the practical outworking of the fact that Jew and Gentile are one in Christ (Rom. 12-15). Paul's letter moves the reader from a section dealing with sin to a section concerning salvation to a section relating to sanctification followed by a section on sovereignty and concluding with a final section on Christian service.

Paul writes the letter to the Romans to show that the righteous purpose of God for both Jew and Gentile is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Romans 6:6 stands out as an integral part of the section of the epistle on sanctification in which Paul identifies the central life principle for the fruitful outworking of the spiritual life which is the same for both Jew and Gentile Christians.

## CHAPTER III

### ROMANS 6:6 IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 6:1-14

#### **Romans 6:6 and the Argument of Romans 6:1-14**

In Romans 6 Paul explains the nature of sanctification. The central idea of Romans 6:1-14 is that sanctification comes through deliverance from the power of sin in the life of the believer which is made possible because of the believer's identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. Paul answers the question of how this came about. From the text, it is clear that God united the believer with the Lord Jesus in His death and resurrection through baptism. The believer in Christ is Spirit-baptized into the Body of Christ according to Romans 6:3-4. When someone is saved, Paul makes clear that that person is baptized into Christ Jesus in the sense that he or she is identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. The believer's union with Christ, "in Christ," is what makes feasible living the Christian way of life right now.

Chapter six, as a whole, deals with two fundamental questions, one in verse one and the other in verse fifteen. These questions, raised by an imaginary objector, provide the overall structure for the chapter. The subject of the entire chapter is the believer's license to sin. In verse one, the question is, "Shall the believer continue in the power of sin that grace may increase?" The answer is given in verses 2-14. It is "no," because the believer is identified with Christ in His death and resurrection and thus is no longer under obligation to sin. The second question is whether the believer should continue to commit sinful acts because he is under grace. The answer to this question, given in the remainder of the chapter, is also "no," because sin leads to bondage and death.

Chapter six is divided into two parts. In the first segment, (vv. 2-5), the apostle Paul contends that God has given the believer freedom from the power of sin by uniting him with Christ in His death and resurrection. In this way, Paul explains why the believer should not continue to live a sinful life. In principle, because of this union with Christ, we walk in newness of life, Christ's life. In verses 6:4-6 Paul explains how this can take place in practice.

The believer is separated from sin in principle because he/she has been united to Christ in His death and His resurrection. The particle οὖν in 6:4 refers to verses two and three and introduces the answer to the question of verse one in the light of the positive effect of our union with Christ. The believer is to live for God because he or she has been united with Christ in His resurrection.

The particle γὰρ in 6:5 introduces an explanatory restatement of verses two through four linking the implications of our union with Christ. Christians have been baptized into the death of Christ, buried with Christ through baptism into death, and raised with Christ to walk in new life.

In the second segment of the first division of Romans chapter six, represented by verses 6 to 14, the apostle exhorts the Christian to appropriate in practice what God has already provided for him or her in principle, by taking three steps exercised in faith in the Word of God. First, he or she is to know, (v. 6), then to reckon, (v. 11), and finally, to yield his or her members, that is, any part of their bodies, to God, (v. 13). In this way, Paul, writing Romans 6:6 underscores the first responsibility of the Christian in the matter of deliverance from the power of the sin nature. The Christian must understand his or her position in Christ so that he or she can then live day by day God's way, practicing the three biblical exhortations; know, reckon, and yield.



## The Exegetical Difficulties of Romans 6:1-14

### 1. *The Meaning of Death to Sin*

#### 1a. The Meaning of Death

This passage of Scripture has aptly been called “death row.” The reason is because of the frequency of the use of the term “death” in the passage. The word “death” occurs no less than thirteen times.

In this context, death does not refer to cessation but rather to separation as the following quotes suggest: “The word ‘death’ in Scripture never means non-existence but always a relative state of existence.”<sup>19</sup> As Hendrikus Berkhof, a professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Leiden rightly concluded, “the Bible views death as separation from God”;<sup>20</sup> “death is not a cessation of existence, but a severance of the natural relations of life.”<sup>21</sup>

In the phrase, “dead to sin,” “ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ,” which occurs in verses two, ten, and eleven, Paul uses the verb from the root ἀποθνήσκω in the first two references and the verb from the root νήσκω in verse eleven. The prefix ἀπο of the verb form, has a root meaning of “off, away from,”<sup>22</sup> emphasizing the separation aspect of death. The form νεκροῦς in 6:11 emphasizes the state of being separated from something or someone.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>J. Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 1:281.

<sup>20</sup>L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p. 259.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.668.

<sup>22</sup>H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p.101.

<sup>23</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated by William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, 4th rev. ed., s.v. “νεκρός, ἄ, ὄν” p.536.

## 2a. The Meaning of Sin

In verses, one and two the definite article τῆ ἁμαρτίᾳ points back to the previously mentioned sin referred to in 5:21. In that verse, sin is personified since it is pictured reigning as a king. It must, therefore, refer to the sin nature.

Throughout the first fourteen verses ἁμαρτία refers to the sin nature. Thus, the question in verse one relates to continuance in the power of the sin nature. The deliverance from that power, which is the subject of the passage, is expressed by several statements as follows: “We died to sin . . .” (6:2); “. . . we are no longer slaves to sin,” (6:6); “. . . freed from sin . . .”(6:7).

## 3a. The Meaning of Death to Sin

The meaning of the phrase “dead to sin” in verse two is the most important exegetical question of the passage because it is the explicit answer to the question concerning libertinism in verse one. There are six different views of what the phrase means.

### (i). The Perfectionist View of the Meaning of Death to Sin

In this view, Christians are understood to be dead to the power of sin. As one writer expresses it: “The baptized Christian cannot sin. Sin is a direct contradiction of the state of things which baptism assumes.”<sup>24</sup> However, the imperatives in verse twelve make this view untenable.

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<sup>24</sup>William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 5th ed. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 153.

**(ii). The Renunciation View of the Meaning of Death to Sin**

The Christian has renounced sin according to this position.<sup>25</sup> The difficulty in this case is that this is not something the Christian is to do but rather it is something that is done to him/her.

**(iii). The Guilt of Sin View of the Meaning of Death to Sin**

According to this interpretation, the Christian has died to the guilt of sin.<sup>26</sup> However, this does not agree with what Paul states in Romans 5:21 and 6:3-14 in which the power of sin rather than the guilt of sin is emphasized.

**(iv). The Judicial View of the Meaning of Death to Sin**

In this view, the Christian died to sin in God's sight when Christ died on the cross for him.<sup>27</sup> While this is an accurate observation it does not deal with the relationship between death and the sin nature.

**(v). The Bearing of Sin's Penalty View of the Meaning of Death to Sin**

According to this interpretation, the Christian has died to sin in the sense that, in Christ, he has borne its penalty.<sup>28</sup> This is supported by the fact that when sin and death are spoken of together in Scripture, death is viewed as sin's penalty, as in Romans 6:23. The difficulty is that the emphasis of the context is on our deliverance from the power of sin and not from the penalty of sin.

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<sup>25</sup> Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, (n.p., 1886; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 192.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Haldane, Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, 5th ed. (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), p. 244.

<sup>27</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 299.

<sup>28</sup> John R. W. Stott, Men Made New (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1966), pp. 42-44.

### (vi). The Reign of Sin View of the Meaning of Death to Sin

In this position, the Christian died as regards the power of the sin nature.<sup>29</sup> This view supports the meaning of death as separation.<sup>30</sup> It is supported by the context. Sin is no longer the ruling tyrant as the phrase “sin reigns” in 5:21 suggests. God effects a fundamental cleavage between the individual and his sin nature. Kenneth Wuest documented this view in his ‘Word Studies from the Greek language’ as ‘the breaking of the power of indwelling sin’ which occurs as the result of a surgical procedure God performs on the inner being cutting the believing sinner loose from his evil nature’ the moment he or she places his or her faith in Christ as Saviour. The old man is still there but the new man is free to say “no” to his sin nature.

Death means separation. Physical death is the separation of a person from his body, spiritual death, the separation of a person from God. There is a preposition prefixed to the verb (apo) which means “off, away from,” and is used with the ablative case whose root meaning is separation. This teaches us that there was a cleavage consummated between the individual and his evil nature. God used His surgical knife to cut the believing sinner loose from his evil nature. This occurred potentially in the mind and purpose of God when that believing sinner... was identified with the Lord Jesus in His death on the Cross (Romans 6:3-7), and actually, the moment he placed his faith in Him as Saviour. Now, while God separated the believing sinner from the evil nature, yet He did not take it out of him, but left it in his inner being.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, An Exposition of Romans 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), pp.19-20.

<sup>30</sup> Arndt and Gingrich (Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 91) include a separate category under the word ἀποθνῆσκω for Romans 6:2 and indicate that it is used “. . . with the dative of the person or thing from which one is separated by death.”

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, “Romans in the Greek New Testament,” Word Studies (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 93.

## 2. The Significance of Baptism

The fact that the word βαπτίζω is used three times in verses three and four demonstrates its importance to the understanding of the passage. The difficulty is that in the synoptic gospels and Acts baptism followed the faith and was related to the forgiveness of sins, and in Romans six, a completely different language is used.<sup>32</sup>

### 2a. The meaning of baptism

#### (i). Sacramental view

Those advocating this position hold that these verses refer to baptismal regeneration by which, in the rite of baptism, a person is joined to Christ as noted by one Roman Catholic commentator:

. . .the impossibility of the Christian living in sin, the apostle deduces from the significance and effect of the sacrament of baptism. He refers to the baptismal act because by it the Christian has been taken into communion with Christ.<sup>33</sup>

The problem with this view is that, in the New Testament, water baptism comes after regeneration, as in Acts 8:36. Besides, the apostle is not referring to the rite of baptism here but rather, to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is clear by the fact that there is no mention of water in the context. Also, the normal meaning of εἰς is not “about” but “into.”

#### (ii). Declaration of baptismal vows

In this view the Christian declares his faith and repudiates the life of sin.<sup>34</sup> The problem is that baptism is not what the believer does but what is done to the believer according to this passage.

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<sup>32</sup> Günter Wagner, Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries trans. J. P. Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), p.5.

<sup>33</sup> Fredrick A. Philippi, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, trans. J. S. Banks, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), 1:290.

<sup>34</sup> Lloyd-Jones, An Exposition of Romans 6, p. 32.

### **(iii). Baptism as a pagan mystery**

Günter Wagner has investigated in depth the question as to whether the Pauline position on baptism was influenced by non-Christian cults.<sup>35</sup> He describes the various pagan mystery rites and the conceptions behind them and concludes that Paul's concept of baptism was independent of the contemporary mystery religions.<sup>36</sup>

### **(iv). Baptism into the sphere of Christ's influence**

Just as the Israelites were baptized into the sphere of Moses' influence, so the Christian is baptized into the sphere of Christ's influence (1 Cor. 10:2).<sup>3</sup> This position does not acknowledge the relationship of baptism and union with Christ which is revealed in the passage.

### **(v). Baptism as a sign of our belief in Christ**

One commentator expresses this view as follows: "It is of the import and design of that sacrament, and the nature of the union with Christ, of which baptism is the sign and the seal . . ."<sup>38</sup> The problem with this view is that in the context it is evident that baptism is more than a mere sign. It is efficacious in identifying the believer with Christ.

### **(vi). Baptism in the relational sense<sup>39</sup>**

"Baptism 'into Christ Jesus' means baptism into union with Christ."<sup>40</sup> It is used in this same way in 1 Corinthians 10:2 in which the Israelites were identified with Moses in the participation of the privileges which the Mosaic economy provided. It is by means of baptism that the believer is put "into Christ."

<sup>35</sup> Günter Wagner, Pauline Baptism, p.v.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>37</sup> Lloyd-Jones, An Exposition of Romans 6, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, p. 193.

<sup>39</sup> Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 10:69.

<sup>40</sup> John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-65), 1 (1959):214.

## 2b. The Kind of Baptism

There has been serious disagreement among commentators throughout the history of the church as to the kind of baptism being referred to in this passage.

### (i). Water Baptism

The vast majority of commentators believe that Paul is referring to water baptism. Newell writes: “We must not confuse this water baptism of Romans Six, which stands for the identification of believers with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection our old man was crucified. That is a divine announcement of fact. Those in Christ have put off the old man.”<sup>40</sup>

### (ii). Spirit Baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13.”<sup>41</sup>

In favor of this view is the fact that in the early church all believers were baptized by water. Besides, baptism by water is normally contemplated whenever the word βαπτίζω is mentioned without further explanation. In Romans six there is no mention of the Spirit. The difficulties of this view are that the usual meaning of εἰς is not “about” but “into.” Also, the phrase βαπτίζεῖν εἰς; does not always mean “about.” Finally, water is never mentioned in any context where βαπτίζεῖν εἰς is used without τὸ σῶμα.<sup>42</sup>

One contemporary commentator observes the following: “The baptizing work is the means of actualizing our co-crucifixion with Christ. Water baptism could not accomplish this union with Christ in His death and resurrection . . . water baptism is the outward picturing of what the Spirit does in the heart.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1938), p. 205.  
Spirit baptism

<sup>42</sup> Bruce O. Rogers, “The Root βαπτίζω in Romans Six” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1952), pp. 29-30.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 29.

This view is preferable because only the baptism of the Spirit can accomplish the union of a believer with Christ. Also, the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer in these verses are spiritual which suggests that they were affected by the Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, it is clear that all believers are baptized into the Body of Christ at the time of salvation.<sup>44</sup> It is the act of the Holy Spirit at regeneration which places a believer into Christ and in this way identifies him with his crucified and risen Savior.<sup>45</sup>

### **3b. The results of baptism**

It is through the Holy Spirit that the believer is identified with Christ in His death (6:3), His burial (6:4), and His resurrection (6:4b, 5, 8-10). The death aspect of the union points to the severance of the believer from his sin nature (Rom. 3:2-3, 7). The burial aspect of the identification stresses the completeness of the union since burial was proof of death.<sup>46</sup> The resurrection aspect of the identification points to a new sphere of living for the believer in which he walks in newness of life, living for God (Rom. 6:4b,11,13). Etymologically, it is not derived from συμφύω, “to plant along with,” but from συμφύω “to make to grow together, to unite.”<sup>47</sup> The word σύμφυτοι in verse five singularly describes this union with great vividness.

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<sup>44</sup>W. H. Griffith Thomas, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947), pp. 164-65.

<sup>45</sup>Merrill F. Unger, The Baptism & Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 105.

<sup>46</sup>John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 1:215.

<sup>47</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, s. v. “σύμφυτος” by Walter Grundmann,7 (1971):786.



Some commentators suggest it refers to an organic union with Christ involving a process of grafting with the idea of “growing together with.”<sup>48</sup> This view cannot be supported by other occurrences of the word in the New Testament. The preferred meaning is “united” or “assimilated.”<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

The subject of Romans 6:1-14 is the believer's deliverance from the power of sin. It is accomplished from God's side with the identification of the believer with Christ in His death and resurrection using the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This act of God dislodges the sin nature as the ruling monarch. One writer states this as follows: “God has so adjusted things in the Christian's life, that, while he remains a free moral agent capable of choosing between obeying the divine nature or the evil nature, yet, the preponderance of choices are Godward.”<sup>50</sup> In Romans 6:6-14 the believer's responsibility is described. The Christian is to know and believe what God has done in identifying him with Christ and then yield himself to God.

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<sup>48</sup>F. Godet, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, n.d.; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 413. C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Harper's. New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), p. 5. Sanday and Headlam, Romans, pp. 154,157.

<sup>49</sup>Cranfield, Romans, p.308.

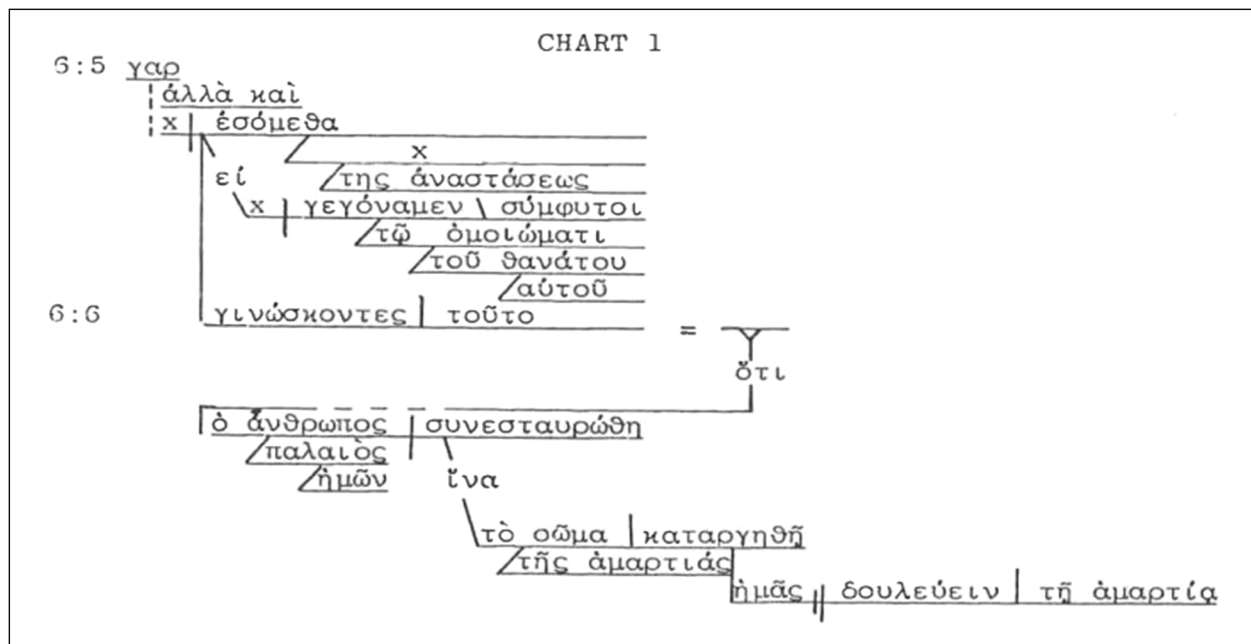
<sup>50</sup>Wuest, “Romans,” p. 95.

## CHAPTER IV

## AN EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 6:6

There are several exegetical questions in Romans 6:6 which need to be dealt with in detail. The meaning of “our old man” “ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος” is the most important question. It is examined in the next chapter. Other key questions include the meaning of the “body of sin,” “τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας” the meaning of συνεσταυρώθη, “was crucified with Christ,” whether the first clause refers to the ethical life of the believer, and whether the verse is to be taken as an elaboration of the doctrine of identification or as the first step in the believers' response to the doctrine.

The structure of the verse is crucial to the understanding of the verse and is presented in the following chart.



### How Does Verse Six Relate to Verse Five?

Verse six is linked to verse five by the participle *γινώσκοντες*, translated into English by the word *knowing* as in a new life principle. This is a circumstantial participle showing how the action of the participle is related to the main verb in verse five. Some commentators, however, believe the causal relationship is the proper emphasis,<sup>51</sup> while others suggest that ‘means’ is more accurate.<sup>52</sup> Hodge sees the connection as that of attendant circumstances.<sup>53</sup> The sense in which the participle *γινώσκοντες* accompanies or modifies the main verb depends on an understanding of the main clause.

In verse five Paul writes: “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” The main issue in this verse is how the future *ἐσόμεθα*, (from *εἰμι* be, exist) should be taken.

There are two ways to interpret this statement, literally or spiritually. On the one hand, the future can be understood as a ‘predictive future’ with eschatological fulfillment in which the literal bodily resurrection is in view. This interpretation assumes that the expression “become united with Him in the likeness of His death” refers to a retroactive positional truth. In this case, the future *ἐσόμεθα* for those who have placed their faith in Christ as Savior entails receiving their resurrection body.

On the other hand, the more widely accepted interpretation by scholars assumes the future *ἐσόμεθα* denotes a logical future referring to the moral life of the believer. This aligns with the meaning of the word “united” translating the original adjective *σύμφυτος*, which means congenital, born together, of joint origin.

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<sup>51</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), p. 112. J. M. Stiffler, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897; reprint ed., Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 112.

<sup>52</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 244.

<sup>53</sup> Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (n.p., 1886; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 197.

The reference in this case is to a spiritual resurrection. While some scholars have adopted the literal interpretation, the majority regard this as a logical sequence applying to the moral life. Furthermore, this interpretation is supported by the context, in which, from verse four through verse six, the moral life of the believer is described by Paul.<sup>54</sup>

The first-class condition, in which the condition is assumed to be true,<sup>55</sup> means verse five could be paraphrased as follows: “Since we have been united to Christ in the likeness of His death, logically, we shall also be united to Christ in the likeness of His resurrection.” The question raised by verse five is how the believer shall be spiritually united to Christ in the likeness of His resurrection. This is answered by verse six. The circumstantial participle expresses manner. The believer shall be spiritually in the likeness of Christ's resurrection by knowing that the old man was crucified with Christ so that he or she is no longer is a slave to sin. This is not all that is required of the believer. It is only the first step. The believer is to know what God has already done in identifying him with Jesus Christ.

#### Does Verse Six Refer to Position or Experience?

This is a crucial question in the understanding of Paul's argument in Romans 6:1-14. If Paul is restating the truths specified in verses two through five or adding another truth, then the believer's responsibility begins in verse eleven.

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<sup>54</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 70.

<sup>55</sup> A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, 4th ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 362.

The other alternative is that Paul is giving the first responsibility of the believer in the light of the identification truths. The commentators are divided in this matter. One commentator writes: “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.”<sup>56</sup>

Another writer expresses the same thought as follows: “Now, in verses 5-10, he repeats these great truths if some of his readers may not have caught their full implications as presented in verse 11.<sup>57</sup> This is also Cranfield and Murray's position: “... it is Paul's way of introducing another element of truth directly relevant to his argument.”<sup>58</sup> Hodge, however, gives another view: “What in the preceding verses is represented as the consequence of our union with Christ as a matter of doctrine, is here presented as a matter of experience.”<sup>59</sup>

The proper interpretation of the author's argument in verse six depends on the correct understanding of the word γινώσκω as it is used in this verse. From the usage of the word γινώσκω in Classical Greek between 900 B.C. and 330 B.C., the meaning includes the idea of personal verification of reality through interaction. One writer observes: “It takes place in man's dealings with his world, inexperience. It denotes close acquaintance with something... It is achieved in all the acts in which a man can attain knowledge, in seeing and hearing, in investigating and reflecting.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 10:70.

<sup>57</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, “Romans in the Greek New Testament,” Word Studies (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 99.

<sup>58</sup>Cranfield, Romans, p. 305; John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-65), 1 (1959):219.

<sup>59</sup>Hodge, Romans, pp. 196-97.

<sup>60</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “γινώσκω” by Rudolf Bultmann, 1 (1964):690.

In the Septuagint, the word is used to translate the Hebrew word יָדָע. In the Old Testament יָדָע means “. . . coming to know in the process of things, experience.”<sup>61</sup> This is clear in the usage in Genesis 4:1 in which it is used to describe the most intimate dealings between a man and a woman. This usage for sexual relations was carried over to the New Testament as in Matthew 1:25.

In koine usage between 330 B.C. and A.D. 330 the idea of knowledge obtainable using investigation emerges. In one papyrus there is a demand from a subordinate for a report of tax-payments in which the person writes: “for I shall thus know whether I shall leave you in employment where you are.”<sup>62</sup>

In the New Testament γινώσκω (ginóskō) is used 221 times, fifty times by Paul, eight of these in the Epistle to the Romans. The primary emphasis of the word continued to be that of knowledge derived from personal experience with particular emphasis on the process of knowledge rather than on having full knowledge.

It is significant that another word for knowing, οἶδα, is used in Romans 6:9 which reads as follows: “. . . knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again.” Vine makes a distinction between the words as follows:

. . . *ginōskō*, frequently suggests inception or progress in knowledge, which *oida* suggests fulness of knowledge,

. . . *ginōskō* frequently implies an active relation between the one who knows and the person known

. . . *oida* expresses the fact that the object has simply come within the scope of the knower's perception.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, sv. “γινώσκω” by Rudolf Bultmann, 1 (1964):697.

<sup>62</sup>The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources, ed. James H. Moulton and George Milligan, 1974 ed., s.v. γινώσκω,” p 127.

<sup>63</sup>W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, 4 vols. (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1940; reprint ed., Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1961), pp. 297-99.

In another theological study of the word the writer notes the following: "... it has the sense of having to do with, have dealings with, know personally."<sup>64</sup> This is Paul's use of the word in Romans 7:7 in which he writes: "... I would not have come to know sin except through the law . . ." It is most likely this same sense that is used in Romans 6:6.

In conclusion, γινώσκω in Romans 6:6 refers to the process of coming to know through personal experience. The present tense shows that the action is durative. The apostle's intent, as regards the development of his argument in Romans 6:1-14, is to show what God has done for the believer in verse two through five, and then, beginning in verse six and on through verse fourteen, what the believer's response should be.

The first response is given in verse six. It is to come to know through personal experience the fact that our "old man" is, worn out. In fact, "our old man" is obsolete, useless. But God has brought about a cleavage with his or her sin nature consummated between the individual and his evil nature, through identification with Christ so that he or she is no longer enslaved to sin.

#### What Does the Clause Following ὅτι Mean?

The clause following ὅτι is appositional to the demonstrative adjective τοῦτο. The particle ὅτι introduces the clause and can be translated, *namely*. The clause gives what the believer is to know. It is that the old man was co-crucified with Christ. The meaning of "our old man," as examined in chapter five, is best understood as the whole unregenerate man under Adam's headship who is in bondage to his sin nature.

The passive voice of συνεσταυρώθη indicates that the old man was acted upon. From the context it is God who acts. The indicative mood shows that Paul conceives of the action as reality. It is an assertion of fact. The aorist is constative, describing an action in its entirety.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), s.v. "knowledge," by E. D. Schmitz, 2 (1976):398.

<sup>65</sup>Ernest D. Burton, Syntax of Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), p. 73.

The action of the co-crucifixion of the old man is presented as a simple, whole, completed act accomplished by God. It points back to the crucifixion of Christ. The spiritual history of the believer in a real sense begins with the crucifixion of Christ. The life principle affirmed that the believer in Christ has died to the power of sin since he or she died with Christ (6:6-11).

The word συνεσταυρώθη occurs five times in the New Testament. Three times it is used in the gospels of the thieves who were crucified with Christ. In Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6:6 it is used of the believer in Christ. In Galatians 2:20 Paul writes: “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” This verb sheds light on Romans 6:6 in that it includes the word Χριστῷ which is omitted in the Romans’ verse. It indicates that the believer’s union is with Christ. This fact is further supported by the prefix συν on the word crucified. The crucifixion refers to the death of Christ on the cross. Paul is saying in this clause that the unregenerate man, who became a believer, was spiritually united with Christ in His death at Calvary.

#### What does the Clause Following ἵνα Mean?

The first purpose clause reads as follows: ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἀμαρτίας. The particle ἵνα is final, giving the purpose for which the old man was crucified with Christ.<sup>66</sup> Cranfield raises the question of what this clause refers to in the following way: “Does this first of the two final clauses . . . refer to what happened in baptism or (as the second purpose clause does) to the moral life of Christians?”<sup>67</sup> The answer to this question requires an examination of the individual elements in the verse.

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<sup>66</sup> Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p.1067.

<sup>67</sup>Cranfield, Romans, p. 310.



## The Meaning of the Body of Sin

The proper interpretation of this phrase is crucial to the understanding of the meaning of the clause and the verse. The phrase indicates exactly what was destroyed or rendered inoperative by the crucifixion of the old man. Yet commentators throughout the centuries, including modern ones, have not arrived at a generally accepted interpretation.

The phrase τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας is made up of the words σῶμα (body) and ἁμαρτίας (sin) which is in the genitive. The word σῶμα occurs thirteen times in the Epistle to the Romans and has two clear usages. In twelve occurrences it is used of the material human organism or physical body. In the thirteenth use, it refers to Christ's mystical body, the church (Rom. 12:5) as in "so we, who are many, are one body (σῶμα) in Christ, and individually members one of another."<sup>68</sup> (NASB).

Sin, when used in the first fourteen verses of Romans six, refers to the sin nature. In Romans 6:6 it is personified as it is at 5:21. The only time this expression is used in this way in the New Testament is in this verse.

### The figurative interpretations

#### Mass of sin

Sin is taken as a genitive of apposition. A genitive of apposition states a specific example that is a part of the larger category which in this particular case would refer to the sin nature. The totality of sin is viewed by Paul in Romans 6:6 as a body having many members. Both Protestant Reformed and Roman Catholic writers have taken this view as evidenced by the following statements: ". . . the entire mass; for man, when left to his own

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<sup>68</sup> S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "A Survey of Biblical Psychology in the Epistle to the Romans" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1949), p. 132.

proper nature is a mass made up of sin,”<sup>69</sup> ἁμαρτίας is conceived of as a σῶμα . . . ”<sup>70</sup> and the phrase refers to “. . . sin embodied . . . ”<sup>71</sup>

### System of evil disposition

This is the view of Charles Hodge who understands the body of sin as a system of evil desires. “Sin is personified . . . It is something that has life, is obeyed; that can be put to death.”<sup>72</sup> The problem with the figurative interpretation is twofold. First, the propensity of references to the physical body in Romans would make that the probable meaning in this verse as well unless that meaning did not fit into the context. There is no need to resort to the figurative interpretation in this instance. Second, the figurative views are unlikely because in verses twelve and thirteen Paul speaks of the holy consecration of the physical body.

### The literal interpretations

In these interpretations, the word σῶμα is taken literally to refer to the material human organism.

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<sup>69</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle - to the Romans, trans. and ed. By John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 125.

<sup>70</sup>Fredrick A. Philippi, Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, trans. J. S. Banks, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T& T. Clark, 1878), 1:298.

<sup>71</sup>Robert Haldane, Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, 5th ed. (New York: Robert Carter 1847), p. 250.

<sup>72</sup>Hodge, Romans, p. 198.

### Sin as an attribute of the physical body

One argument given for the view that the phrase is referring to a sinful body is that the word σῶμα is subsequently put for the word γὰρ and our corrupt nature (Rom. 12:8-13).<sup>73</sup> The difficulty with this view is that the Scripture nowhere teaches that the body is itself sinful. Also, this meaning is contrary to the sense of Romans 6:12-13 where the believer is encouraged to present his body as a holy sacrifice.

### Sin nature

The phrase is described as “. . . the corrupt human nature which we carry with us. . . .”<sup>74</sup> or “. . . the body of sin, that is the sin nature . . .”<sup>75</sup> The problem with this view is that it does not deal with the word σῶμα in the phrase.

J. Sidlow Baxter believes that the phrase τὸ σῶμα ἁμαρτίας refers to “Adam as humanity in its corporate totality as viewed in its guilt before God.”<sup>76</sup> He supports this position from the context in which he traces the thought of corporate totality from Romans 5:12-21, from the similarity of the phrase to the old man because one was crucified and the other was destroyed, and a parallel verse, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 which reads: “. . . one died for all, therefore all died.”<sup>76</sup> The difficulty with this view is the unusual use that it is necessary to give to both the word σῶμα and the word ἁμαρτίας.

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<sup>73</sup>G. T. Shedd, A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1879), p. 155.

<sup>74</sup>Marcus Rainsford, Lectures on Romans VI, 4th ed. (London: Hamilton Adams & Co., n.d.), p.44.

<sup>75</sup>Dwight J. Pentecost, Designed to Be Like Him (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 117.

<sup>76</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, A New Call to Holiness (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 94-100.

Adam humanity in its corporate totality

The whole man as  
controlled by sin

A contemporary writer offers the view that the word  $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$  refers to the whole man, including the immaterial part and the phrase applies to the whole man as controlled by sin.<sup>77</sup> The problem in this instance is that in the letter to the Romans the body refers in twelve out of thirteen occurrences to the physical body only.

The physical body as  
possessed by the sin nature

The genitive  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$  is taken as a possession. The body is possessed by the sin nature. Wuest writes: the believer's physical body before salvation, possessed by or dominated by the sin nature..<sup>78</sup> Alford observes: which belongs to sin."<sup>79</sup> Robertson writes: "the body of which sin has taken possession."<sup>80</sup> Newell describes the phrase as follows "our bodies, as yet unredeemed, and not delivered from sin's rule."<sup>81</sup>

While most of these writers correctly note the fact that the body, in this context, is viewed as controlled by sin, their emphasis is more on possession than control.

The phrase in the light of the context of Romans 6:1-14 and Romans 5:21 stresses not so much the fact of possession as the idea of agency.

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<sup>77</sup>Cranfield, Romans, p. 309.

<sup>78</sup>Wuest, "Romans," p. 101.

<sup>79</sup>Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament: with a Critically Revised Text, a Digest of Various Readings, Marginal References to Verbal and Idiomatic Usage, Prolegomena, and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary, vol. 2: Acts to II Corinthians; 5 vols. (London: Oxford Press, 1852; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, 1976), 2:368.

<sup>80</sup>A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. 4; The Epistles of Paul; 6 vols. (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1930-33) 4 (1931):362.

<sup>81</sup>Newell, Romans, p. 214.

## The physical body as the agent of the sin nature

Some commentators have expressed the idea of agency as follows: “. . . our body viewed as sin's stronghold, medium, vehicle.”<sup>82</sup> “. . . the body so far as it serves as an instrument of sin in human life. . .”<sup>83</sup> conditioned and controlled by sin.<sup>84</sup>

This view is in agreement with the meaning of the words σῶμα and ἁμαρτίας as used in the epistle and Romans chapter six. The phrase is a metonymy of the effect as Bullinger observes: “The effect is put for the cause, which is the old nature, that through the body, works our sin . . .”<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

The phrase τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας refers to the material human organism as far as it is ruled by the old nature. It is thus to be understood that the body is the instrument or agent of the sin nature.

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<sup>82</sup>H. C. G. Moule, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans (Cambridge: The University Press, 1879), p. 165.

<sup>83</sup>Godet, Romans, p. 416.

<sup>84</sup>Murray, Romans, p. 220.

<sup>85</sup>E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; reprinted. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 565.

### The Meaning of καταργέω (katargeo)

After studying the way καταργέω is translated in its twenty-four occurrences in the New Testament in the Authorized Version, the English Revised Version, and the American Standard Version, one writer concluded as follows: “Is it not clear beyond misunderstanding that the basic meaning of καταργέω is to bring to naught; to do away. How can it mean less in Romans 6:6?”<sup>86</sup> However, there are clear instances where the meaning cannot be that as in Hebrews 2:14 which reads: “. . . He likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him, who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Further, as one writer notes: “katargeo may be rendered elsewhere in Romans ‘to render ineffective’ (3:3, 3:31), ‘to not fulfill an intended function’ (4:14) and, ‘to be set free from a bond condition’ (7:2, 6).”<sup>87</sup> The sense of rendering inoperative for this verse is also substantiated in the following theological study of the word:

In the NT, it is used with the secular meanings a. “to condemn to inactivity” (Lk. 13:7); b. “to destroy” (1 C. 13:11), and c. “to remove from the sphere of activity” (R. 7:2).

In the religious sense, which is almost exclusive to Paul, it means “to make completely inoperative: or “to put out of use”. . . that the body of sin, . . . is robbed of its power to affect the religious and moral attitude and development of man (R. 6:6).<sup>88</sup>

The meaning of καταργέω, as it is used in Romans 6:6, is thus to render idle, inactive, inoperative, to cause to cease. The passive voice indicates that the body of sin is acted upon. This is an ingressive aorist. This stress is the entrance into the state or condition in which the body, as an instrument of sin, is rendered inoperative.

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<sup>86</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, A New Call to Holiness, p. 69.

<sup>87</sup>Lawrence E. Finch, “A Critique of Warfield's Concept of Sanctification in the Light of Romans 6--8 (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), p. 16.

<sup>88</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “katargeo,” by Gerhard Delling. 1 (1964): 452-53.

## Conclusion

Now that the individual parts of the clause are analyzed in detail the important question of whether this clause refers to what took place in baptism or the moral life of the Christian can be answered. The difficulty with the view that this clause refers to what happened in baptism is the contingency brought out by the use of the subjunctive mood. Had Paul wished to indicate what else happened in baptism he would have used the indicative mood, the mood of reality. It is better to take this clause as referring to the moral life of the believer. Cranfield argues against this interpretation because he says: “. . . the double statement of the purpose on the ethical level seems tautological.”<sup>89</sup>

However, this first clause can be understood as the first step to the ultimate purpose for which the old man was crucified, which according to the last part of the verse, is that the Christian might no longer serve sin. In conclusion, this clause should be taken as the first purpose ethically for which the old man was crucified with Christ. This is that the physical body, as an instrument of sin, should be rendered inoperative.

### What is the Significance of the Second Purpose Clause?

This clause relates to the moral life. Cranfield observes: “In baptism our sinful selves were crucified and died . . . so that we might in our practical living cease to be slaves to sin.”<sup>90</sup> The infinitive δουλεύειν introduces the second purpose clause in the verse.<sup>91</sup> The clause is dependent on the ἵνα clause. There is thus a progressive purpose in the verse. The old man was crucified to render inoperative the body as an instrument of sin which, in turn, is made idle for the purpose that the Christian may no longer be a slave to sin. The dative direct object of the infinitive, τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, refers to the sin nature.

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<sup>89</sup>Cranfield, Romans, p. 310. <sup>90</sup>Ibid. <sup>91</sup>Robertson, A Grammar, p. 1002.

Thus, as in Romans 5:21, the sin nature is personified. It is pictured as a tyrant demanding obedience from its slaves. The word δουλεύειν is the verbal form of δούλος which refers to a “bond-man.” It is from the root δέω and is described by Trench as: “. . . one that is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will altogether swallowed up in the will of the other.”<sup>92</sup> The meaning of this clause is that the believer is no longer to be a slave to his sin nature. This is the ultimate objective of the crucifixion of the old man.<sup>93</sup>

### Conclusion

Romans 6:6 explains the first step of how the believer is to experience likeness to Christ in His resurrection. It is by knowing through personal experience what God has done in crucifying the unregenerate individual who is in bondage to his sin nature. This has two purposes ethically. First, the old man was crucified that the physical body, as an instrument of the sin nature, should be rendered inoperative, and second, that the believer is no longer a slave to his sin nature.

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<sup>92</sup>Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Macmillan and Co., 1865; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: *Wm.* B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1973), p. 30.

<sup>93</sup>Lloyd-Jones, Romans 6, p. 77.



## CHAPTER V

### OUR OLD MAN

#### Introduction

I suppose there is no term that so frequently troubles Christian people as this term. All who are concerned about sanctification are concerned about this expression, “our old man.” Some people have spent their lives trying to kill their “old man” to get rid of their “old man.”<sup>94</sup>

Central to the study of Romans 6:6 is the phrase “Our Old Man.” One of the main difficulties of the term is that it is figurative. Figurative language does not have literal meaning to make a point or develop an argument but often enhances understanding by comparing something unknown to what is known which tends to be more memorable. Paul uses the term “Our Old Man” to make his argument more convincing. In so doing he gets his point across with a greater impact on the reader.

The reality of the author’s intent behind the figure, “the old man” by necessity needs to be drawn from the historical background, the context, and other New Testament usages. Bible commentators throughout the history of the church have come to several different conclusions. Simplicity, clarity, and accuracy have been the basis of the selection of titles and classifications of the various views. Before evaluating the individual perspectives of the meaning of “Our Old Man,” some considerations regarding the background of the term inform the understanding and implications of the term.

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<sup>94</sup>D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, An Exposition of Romans 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 62.

These include historical considerations and contextual factors as well as lexical considerations. When the meaning of a word or phrase such as “Our Old Man” cannot be taken literally, the reader must keep these considerations in mind. As expected, the views regarding the phrase “Our Old Man” have been taken in different ways by Bible scholars ever since Paul’s letter to the Roman church have come to different conclusions. The most widely accepted views of respected New Testament and Bible scholars involving the phrase “Our Old Man” include those taken up for reflection in this thesis including a racial order, the whole human race in Adam, the sin nature, the whole unregenerate man, and man in bondage to sin.

#### Historical Considerations

The apostle Paul had never seen most of the members of the church in Rome he was writing to, according to the historical record. He had never previously had an opportunity to instruct them. Besides, the only other places where the term is used in the New Testament are in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians and the Colossians. These letters were written several years after his letter to the Romans. For these reasons, the meaning of the term, “our old man,” must be evident from the epistle itself and most likely the context in which the term is used.

#### Contextual Considerations

##### Romans 5:12-21

In the immediately preceding section of the epistle the apostle describes the Christian's transfer in federal headship from the first Adam to the last Adam. He develops the contrast between Adam and Christ (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17, 19). The idea of federal headship, first, of Adam, and then, after regeneration, of the Lord Jesus Christ, needs to be kept in mind in analyzing the meaning of the term. Adam was the federal (or representative) head of the human race. According to the federal headship theory, or federalism, Adam chose to sin,...

Romans 6:1-14

There is a parallel thought in these verses expressed by different phrases as follows: “dead to sin,” 6:2; “baptized into His death,” 6:3; “united with Him in the likeness of His death,” 6:5. The phrase “our old self was crucified with Him,” appears to have a similar connotation as these other phrases in the immediate context, 6:6.

## Lexical Considerations

There are two words for “man” in the New Testament, ἄνθρωπος and ἀνὴρ (anēr). The first usually has a generic sense. It is used either for the physical being or the class, mankind.<sup>95</sup> In its usage in Romans 6:6, it refers to the individual male or female. The other word ἀνὴρ means exclusively a male person.<sup>96</sup>

In New Testament usage differences in meaning also exist in the comparative “old” which is used. The first, ἀρχαῖος means old as regards point in time, while παλαιός (palaios) used in the term under consideration, means “. . . old in the sense of worn out, useless.”<sup>97</sup> παλαιός refers to something that was done away with. The “old man” is not the sin nature but represents the person he or she was before placing his or her trust in Christ. This old man is worn out by use . . . useless.

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<sup>95</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 4th rev. ed. s. v. “ἄνθρωπος,” p. 67.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>97</sup>Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Macmillan and Co., 1863; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1973), p. 252.

## Views on “Our Old Man”

### A Racial Order

Everett Harrison has proposed the following: “Since ‘man’ has been used of Adam, (5:12, 17, 19) it is possible that what has been crucified with Christ is our place in Adam; our position in the old creation.”<sup>98</sup> The main difficulty with this view is that it is unlikely that there is a relationship between the Christian's position in the old creation and his relationship of bondage to sin as verse six requires.

### The Whole Human Race in Adam

J. Sidlow Baxter offers another unique interpretation. He writes concerning the term: “It, is a Paulinism meaning the whole human race in Adam.”<sup>99</sup> The new man, in his view, is the whole body of believers. He suggests this view based on the reference to the first Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47, and the parallel to Romans 5:12-21 in which the one man, Adam, is compared to the one man, Christ. He concludes that the “old man” in Romans 6:6 should be identified with the recurrent “one man” in Romans five.

Baxter notes that the plural personal pronoun, “our,” indicates not an “old man” in each of us, but the “old man” including all. There are two serious difficulties in this position in verse six. The first is that the entire human race was crucified with Christ on the cross at Calvary. There is no support for this idea elsewhere in Scripture. The second difficulty is that the phrase “body of sin” needs to be taken unusually.

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<sup>98</sup>Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 70.

<sup>99</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, A New Call to Holiness (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp.94-100.

Baxter understands it to refer to Adam humanity in its corporate totality, thus equating the meaning with the term “the old man” which is very unlikely.

#### The Sin Nature

The proponents of this position include Robert Haldane,<sup>100</sup> Charles Hodge, F. Godet, and E. W. Bullinger. In this view the “old man” refers to the old nature or the sin nature. Hodge calls it “the corrupt nature as opposed to the new nature.”<sup>101</sup> Godet relates the view to Adam as follows: “The old man denotes human nature such as it has been made by the sin of him whom originally it was wholly concentrated, fallen Adam reappearing in every human ego that comes into the world under the sway of the preponderance of self-love.”<sup>102</sup>

Bullinger understands the phrase as a metonymy of the subject in which the subject is put for that which is connected with it as in the substitution of the name of an attribute for that of the thing meant. He writes concerning the “old man” as follows: “. . . not a man really, but our old nature derived from Adam. . .”<sup>103</sup> This view fails to account for the significance of the term ἄνθρωπος. The second objection is that it does not relate the significance of Romans 5:12-21 to the interpretation as it should because the term needs to be understood from the context.

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<sup>100</sup>Robert Haldane, Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, 5th ed. (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), p. 250.

<sup>101</sup>Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (n.p. 1886; reprinted., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 197.

<sup>102</sup>F. Godet, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881; reprinted., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 415.

<sup>103</sup>E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 569.

### The Adamic Nature

In this view the “old man” is the entire Adamic nature which continues as the sin nature in the believer after regeneration. The old man is the unregenerate self. Rainsford calls the old man “our natural self, with all its principles and motives.”<sup>104</sup> Chafer writes that: “the old man is the Adamic nature which was judged in the death of Christ. It still abides with the saved one as an active principle in his life,<sup>105</sup> Barrett also adheres to this position. He writes that the old man is “. . . the nature of the unconverted man, which upon conversion and baptism is replaced by the new nature, the ‘new man.’”<sup>106</sup>

This view, with the emphasis on the pre-conversion nature of a person who is under the federal headship of Adam, is aptly drawn from Romans 5:12-21. However, like the previous view, it does not account fully for the meaning of the word ἄνθρωπος. This is the view of several commentators who express the idea in the following ways: “. . . our former self before acceptance of Christ . . .”<sup>107</sup> what we were before we became Christians . . .”<sup>108</sup> “. . . the term old man in Rom. 6:6 denotes the whole unregenerate man conceived of as a member of the first federal man, Adam . . .”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Marcus Rainsford, Lectures on Romans VI, 4th ed. (London: Hamilton Adams & Co., n.d.), p. 43.

<sup>105</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. G (1948); Pneumatology; 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-48), p. 271.

<sup>106</sup>C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), p. 125.

<sup>107</sup>James U. Stifler, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Fleming Revell Company 1897; reprint ed., Chicago: Moody Press, 1930), p. 112.

<sup>108</sup>William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

<sup>109</sup>S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., “A Survey of Biblical Psychology in the Epistle to the Romans” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1949), p. 132.

## The Whole Unregenerate Man

“ . . . the whole of me as I was before I was converted. . . .”<sup>110</sup> . . . the old man is the man I used to be in Adam . . .”<sup>111</sup> “ . . . the person in his unity as dominated by sin and flesh. . . .”<sup>112</sup> “ . . . all that we were by nature through our first birth . . . .”<sup>113</sup>

The advantages of this position are that it brings out the fact that the word ἄνθρωπος means more than just nature. It refers to the whole man. This interpretation also takes due consideration of the preceding context of Romans 5:12-21. I was in Adam; I am now a man in Christ. Our “old self” existed in sin and self-reliance before we were in Christ. The fact that the old man is something that was done away with is supported by the perfect tense of the word “crucified” which stresses completed action.

The reason some commentators have taken other views than this one is because of the usage of the term in Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9 which appears to contradict this interpretation. This may have been caused in part by the decision of the editors of the New American Standard Bible of Ephesians 4:22. As it is translated the believer is exhorted to put off the old man. In the interpretation that the old man is the whole unregenerate self the old man is already put off. Therefore, how could the believer be asked to put off the old man in another passage?

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<sup>110</sup>John R. W. Stott, Men Made New (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1966), p. 45.

<sup>111</sup>Lloyd-Jones, Romans 6, pp. 62-63.

<sup>112</sup>John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-35), 1 (1939):214.

<sup>113</sup>Dwight J. Pentecost, Designed to Be Like Him, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 117.

The context in which the old man is used in Ephesians and Colossians is remarkably similar. In Colossians three and Ephesians four the apostle describes the proper conduct of the believer in the light of his calling by God in Ephesians and of his caller, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Colossians. In both epistles Christian conduct begins with an awareness of the believer's union with Christ. This is the basis for holiness and the spiritual life of the believer.

In Colossians, 3:9 believers are told not to lie to one another: “μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ.” The main exegetical question is the aorist middle participle ἀπεκδυσάμενοι. The middle voice shows that it is done by the subject for his own. It is probably a causal circumstantial participle giving the reason that believers should not lie to one another. It is because the old man has already been put off. One writer summarizes the thrust of Colossians 3:9-10 as follows:

Paul is not exhorting believers to put off the old man and to put on the new. He is urging them to desist from certain sins, sins which are indeed characteristic of the old man, and the reason he adduces for such abstinence is that they have put off the old man and have put on the new man.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, in Colossians 3:9 the apostle Paul conceives of the old man as the total unregenerate man as a member of the first federal head, Adam. In Ephesians four, in the first sixteen verses, the apostle describes the believer's proper conduct about the former life. In verse twenty-two they are reminded of what they were taught in Christ, that is, that they should put off, as regards the former way of life, the old man. The main exegetical difficulty is the force of the aorist infinitive ἀποθέσθαι. The difficulty occurs when this is taken as an imperative infinitive which could mean that the believer to put off the old man himself, an impossibility if it has already been put off.

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<sup>114</sup>John Murray, Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., (1957):214.



The imperatival infinitive is given as a valid category by the grammarians Blass and DeBrunner, Burton, and Robertson. However, Burton notes the following: “The New Testament furnishes but one certain instance of this usage, namely Philippians 3:16 and Romans 12:15 is another probable instance.<sup>115</sup> Blass similarly restricts the occurrences in the New Testament. He writes: “It is limited in the NT to two passages in Paul. R 12:15...Ph 3:16.”<sup>116</sup> Robertson finds more instances than Blass or Burton.<sup>117</sup> However, none cite Ephesians 4:22 as an example. The apostle is probably thinking of results rather than exhortation or content.<sup>118</sup> The verse should thus be translated “. . . so that ye have put off according to the former manner of life, the old man. The thrust of the verse is the characterization of the old man. The old man refers to the total unregenerate man. Thus, from Colossians 3:9 and Ephesians 4:22, the view that the old man applies to the total unregenerate man is sustained.

The one difficulty is that the statement of this interpretation does not stress the relationship of the unregenerate man to his sin nature. It is this relationship that is foremost in the author's mind in Romans 6:1-14.

#### Man, in Bondage to Sin

This view takes the position of the old man as the total unregenerate man a step further. It answers the question, what is the total unregenerate man like who is in Adam? From the context of Romans 5:12-21 and Romans six it is “man in bondage to his sin nature.”

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<sup>115</sup>Ernest D. Burton, Syntax of Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), p. 146.

<sup>116</sup>Blass and A. DeBrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 196.

<sup>117</sup>A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, 4th ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 943.

<sup>118</sup>Burton, Moods, and Tenses, pp. 147-51

He is a slave to sin. Thus, the stress is on the relationship between man and his sin nature. One writer brings all these considerations together in his definition as follows: “. . . our old state, as out of Christ and under Adam's headship, under guilt and in moral bondage.”<sup>119</sup> The phrase “in moral bondage” brings out what appears to be the main stress of the term “our old man.”

This view has the same advantages as the previous view in that it fits into the context of Romans 5:12-21 and the fact that as a person under the federal headship of Adam, the man is in bondage to sin. The word ἄνθρωπος (Anthropos) is viewed as more than nature. It is seen as the whole man in bondage to sin. This interpretation fits well the other uses of the term in Colossians and Ephesians as understood in the discussion under the whole unregenerate man. Colossians 3:9 would read: “Do not lie to one another since you laid aside the man in bondage to sin with its evil practices . . .” Ephesians 4:22 would be translated so that you have put off about your former manner of life, the man in bondage to sin . . .”

The main advantage of this interpretation over the total unregenerate man is that it fits the context of Romans 6:1-14 more precisely. The passage stresses identification with Christ in His death which results in the cleavage between the believer and his sin nature. Separation from sin is the crucial thought of the passage as expressed in Romans 6:2, “. . . dead to sin . . .” The thought of Romans 6:6 is parallel to that thought. The old man was crucified with Christ that the believer might no longer serve sin. When the old man is interpreted as “man in bondage to sin” it explains why the believer no longer needs to serve sin.

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<sup>119</sup>Philip Mauro, Baptism (London: Morgan and Scott, 1914), p. 164.

### Conclusion

The old man is best understood as the whole unregenerate man under Adam's headship in his relationship of bondage to his sin nature. The emphasis is on the relationship to the sin nature. The unregenerate man is controlled by and a slave to his sin nature. This view is supported by the fact that *ανθρωπός* is understood as the whole man and not just his nature.

The context of Romans 5:12-21 supports this view in which the conception of the individual unbeliever under the headship of Adam and thus controlled by his sin nature is considered. The immediate context of Romans 6:1-14 also supports this view in which the stress is on the separation of the believer from his sin nature through his identification with Jesus Christ in his death. The other usages of the term in Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9 can also be adequately explained with this view.

## CHAPTER VI

### A THEOLOGY OF ROMANS 6:6

#### Anthropology

From Romans 5:12--6:14 it is apparent that, in a sense, there are two kinds of people in this world. Some are related to the first Adam, the federal head of the human race, and some are related to Christ, the second Adam. The person who is in the first Adam is under the dominion of his sin nature. This is the fundamental idea in the term “our old man” in Romans 6:6.

At the moment of salvation, the believer is baptized into Christ, becoming identified with Him in His death and resurrection. There is now a cleavage between the believer and his sin nature. Though the sin nature remains in his life he is no longer in bondage to it. He is now free to respond to the new capacity in his life and to refuse to serve his sin nature.

#### Sanctification

##### A Definition

The term “sanctification” basically means to separate. Trench writes concerning the term: “Its fundamental idea is separation, and, so to speak, consecration and devotion to the service of deity.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Macmillan and Co., 1865; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 331.

A more complete definition is given by L. Berkhof as follows: “Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which He purifies the sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.”<sup>121</sup> In Romans 6:6 the stress is on the negative side of sanctification. The idea in this verse is separation from the bondage of the sin nature.

### The Phases of Sanctification

There are four phases of sanctification that can be identified in the New Testament. Primary sanctification relates to the past aspect in which under God's sovereign election, a person is set apart (1 Pet. 1:2). Positional sanctification occurs at the moment of regeneration (1 Cor. 1:2). Progressive sanctification involves the daily growth in grace and the continuous process of being set apart. Prospective sanctification refers to the ultimate likeness to Christ which will occur at His second coming (1 Thess. 5:23).

In Romans 6:6 the positional and the progressive phases of sanctification are brought out. The positional aspect is referred to by the statement that our old man was crucified with Christ. This looks back to the moment of regeneration. The believer was positionally set apart as a result of his union with Christ.

The present tense of the participle *γινώσκοντες* in Romans 6:6 implies the progressive aspect of sanctification. The transformative life principle for the believer is to know his position in Christ and reckon it to be true which leads to becoming sanctified daily in his or her conduct (Rom. 6:6, 11).

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<sup>121</sup>L. Berkhof, Manual of Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1933), p. 269.

### The Basis of Sanctification

One of the problems the church concerned itself within the historical unfolding of the doctrine of sanctification was the relation of sanctification to justification.<sup>122</sup> From Romans 6:6 there is an indication that the basis of sanctification is the same as justification. The believer was crucified with Christ. The reference to the atonement of Christ suggests that both justification and sanctification were accomplished simultaneously by Christ's substitutionary death on the cross. While in justification Christ's death accomplished deliverance from the guilt of sin, in sanctification His death delivered the believer from the power of sin. In both cases, in justification and sanctification, the work has been completed. Christ's death on the cross was sufficient to justify and to sanctify. The experiential realization in both cases comes from appropriating by faith what God has made available. It involves coming to know the facts and then believing those facts.

### The Source of Sanctification

Though the New Testament reveals that the triune God is involved in sanctification, the Holy Spirit is given a prominent role in this work. This relates to the second area of controversy in the church historically. The issue was concerned with the relation of the grace of God in sanctification to faith.<sup>123</sup> In Romans 6:6 there is the suggestion that God is the source of sanctification. The passive voice in *συνεσταυρώθη* indicates that it is not the work of man. Furthermore, crucifixion is the one form of death that cannot be self-administered. Just as the Holy Spirit is the one who baptizes the believer into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12-13) so He is probably the one who baptizes the believer into Christ in Romans 6:6.

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<sup>122</sup>L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p. 529.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

### The Scope of Sanctification

Sanctification affects the whole man. It takes place in the inner life of the individual and the effects are gradually evident in outward behavior. In Romans 6:6 the mind and the body are involved. It is with the mind that the believer is to come to know the truth concerning his identification with Christ. As he comes to know and believe this truth his physical body will be increasingly an instrument for God and not for his sin nature.

In Romans 6:1-14 the heart is also involved in reckoning and the will in yielding (Rom. 6:11, 13). Thus, all the parts of his soul and his body are affected.

### The Means of Sanctification

The principal means used by the Holy Spirit is the Word of God, John 17:17. The Scriptures provide the objective conditions for a holy life. In Romans 6:6 the believer is to know some specific facts about his relationship to Christ and his sin nature. This is the first step to spiritual growth.

### The Human Factor in Sanctification

It is apparent, from Romans 6:1-14, that the believer's role is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sanctification. This involves knowing what the Bible says, reckoning it to be true, and yielding his life to God. Faith is the main work. One writer observes the following concerning the identification truths: "The only way to make this practical in our lives is to take this fact by faith. Then we understand the resurrection power available to us."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, Exposition of Bible Doctrines, vol. 6: God's Freedom (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Evangelical Foundation, Inc. 1959; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 92.

Another writer adds the following: “Oneness with Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the Christian, but it is not until he is united to Christ by faith that these blessings are made over to him.”<sup>125</sup> Romans 6:6 gives the first step of the believer's responsibility. It involves coming to know that he has been identified with Christ and is separated from his sin nature.

### The Effects of Sanctification

Good works are the fruit of sanctification in the life of the believer. As the believer responds to the revealed Word of God, he will increasingly live a life that is pleasing to God. That is not to say that he will be perfectly free from sin as the Perfectionists believe.

Perfectionism was the third area of major dispute in the doctrine of sanctification in the church. It had several proponents throughout church history including the Pelagians, the Roman Catholics, the Armenians, Wesleyans, Quakers, and some of the Oberlin theologians, such as Finney. While these advocates of Perfectionism have differing views on such matters as sin and the conception of the law, they all agree with the idea that sin is external to the Christian.<sup>126</sup>

One form of perfectionism, formulated by John Wesley, that is in evidence today, and that closely relates to Romans 6:6 is eradicationism. In this view “entire sanctification” comes by way of the “second blessing” which completely eradicates the sin nature.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Arthur Pink, The Doctrine of Sanctification(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), p. 192.

<sup>126</sup>Berkhoff, Systematic Theology, p. 538.

<sup>127</sup>Baxter, A New Call to Holiness, p. 46.



This idea has come from a misunderstanding of several of the terms used in the verse. The old man and the body of sin are both equated to the old nature and the word *katargeō-καταργέω* is rendered “destroyed.”<sup>128</sup> The testimony of all of Scripture makes this doctrine untenable, as in 1 John 1:8. The proper interpretation of Romans 6:6 also makes clear that the eradication of the sin nature is not in view. The sin nature is no longer to have dominion over the believer though it is still within the believer.

In conclusion, the effects of sanctification from Romans 6:6 are not that the believer will live a perfect life but that, as he cooperates with God's sanctifying work, he will sin less and less.

### Conclusion

Theologically, Romans 6:6 relates primarily to the areas of anthropology and sanctification. The verse teaches that a person who is in Christ is a new creature in that he is identified with Christ and no longer in bondage to his sin nature. Several truths about sanctification are taught in the verse. The verse shows sanctification as separation from the bondage of the sin nature. The believer is positionally sanctified by the work of God in identifying him with Christ. The progressive aspect of sanctification is also seen in the continuative emphasis given to the action of knowing by the participle *γνωρίζοντας* (*gnorizontas*) being in the present tense.

The basis of sanctification is justification. Christ's substitutionary death on the cross provided not only deliverance from the penalty of sin but also the power of sin. Sanctification is the work of God which involves the whole man whose responsibility it is to cooperate with God in that work, by knowing and then believing the Word of God. The effects of sanctification are works that are pleasing to God.

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<sup>128</sup>Baxter, A New Call to Holiness, p. 58-59.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this work to exegete Romans 6:6 and to derive theology from the verse. The author's interest in the doctrine of sanctification, the importance of Romans 6:6 to that doctrine, and the apparent confusion in this area of theology among contemporary evangelicals, led to the study of this topic.

The procedure in the work was first, to examine the verse within the context and argument of the Epistle to the Romans, which was done in chapter 2. The next step was to study the verse within the immediate context of Romans 6:1-14, which was done in chapter 3. In chapter 4 the verse was studied by itself. The most important exegetical question in the verse, the meaning of the term, "our old man," was considered separately in chapter 5. From this exegesis theological truths related to the verse were analyzed in chapter 6.

In terms of the findings of the study, it was concluded that the Epistle to the Romans was written by the Apostle Paul to deal with the animosity that had arisen between Jew and Gentile in the church in Rome. Paul's argument in the letter is that the righteous purpose of God for both Jew and Gentile is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Romans 6:6, as a part, of the section of the letter related to sanctification, follows the sections of the letter related to the sin of the Jew and the Gentile in 1:18--3:20 and justification by faith in 3:21--5:21. The inclusion by Paul of the section on sanctification was to show that the basis and outworking of the spiritual life are the same for all Christians.

In chapter 3 on the immediate context of the verse, it was concluded that Paul's argument in Romans 6:1-14 was that deliverance from the power of sin is possible for the believer because of his identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. In verses, 2-5 Paul records God's work in identifying the believer with Christ through baptism, with the result that the believer is separated from his sin nature. In verses, 6-14 Paul indicates what the believer's responsibility is. This involves coming to know that God has united him with Jesus Christ (6:6), reckoning this to be true (6:11), and yielding his members to God (6:13).

In this chapter the crucial contextual exegetical questions were examined. The phrase "death to sin" in 6:2 was determined to refer to separation from the sin nature. It was decided that the baptism mentioned in these verses referred to the effective baptism by the Holy Spirit which unites the believer to Christ.

Verse six was examined in chapter 4. It was concluded from the meaning of the participle of manner *γινώσκοντες* that links verse six to verse five that verse six relates to the experience of the Christian. He is called upon to come to know that the old man was crucified with Christ. The term "our old man" was analyzed in chapter five and determined to mean the whole unregenerate man, under Adam's headship, in his relationship of bondage to his sin nature. It was concluded that the appositional clause following the participle refers to the death of the old man of the believer with Christ.

The phrase "the body of sin" was understood to mean the material human organism in its relationship as the instrument of the sin nature. The word *καταργηθῆ* was taken to mean "to render idle." The clause, taken to refer to the moral life of the believer, means that the physical body, as an instrument of the sin nature, should be rendered idle. The second final clause in the verse, introduced by the infinitive *δουλεύειν*, was also understood to relate to the ethical life of the believer. It provides the ultimate objective of our

identification with Christ, which is that the believer should no longer be a slave to his sin nature.

In chapter six on the theology of the verse it was found that various truths about sanctification were present. Sanctification could be described as separation from the sin nature which positionally, occurred by God's work in identifying the believer with Christ in His death, and which progressively occurs as the believer comes to know in experience his union with Christ. Sanctification had its basis in the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. It involves the whole man whose responsibility it is to cooperate with the work of God. Its fruit is that a believer will sin less and less.

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