***How did we Die to the Old Sin Nature?  
RO65-02***

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We are now looking at Romans 6:3-4, which is explaining what steps God has taken to enable a person to go to heaven – how God has made it possible for a sinner to be justified.

People, by natural reasoning, are completely in error on the subject of how to go to heaven. For this reason, the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 1:21, says, "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;" that is, the preaching that has the content of New Testament divine viewpoint doctrine. God uses that to save people. But the problem is that people, on their own, are completely in error on how to go to heaven. Human viewpoint on the matter is directly opposite from divine viewpoint.

For this reason, the Bible has made it clear to us that man's ways are not God's ways. You remember that in Isaiah 55:8-9, we read, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

Then in Proverbs 16:25 we have this word of wisdom: "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." So, when men start thinking on a plan to relate them to a holy God (to be accepted by this holy God), their human viewpoint always comes out 180 degrees opposite from God's divine viewpoint. Man's thoughts are not God's thoughts, and what man seems to think is very reasonable and acceptable and proper in relating himself to that God, the Bible tells us, is going to lead him to eternal death.

So, you've got a problem. The problem is infinitely compounded by the fact that when somebody stands up and says, "Now, here is a divine viewpoint on how to go to heaven," the natural man (contaminated by the old sin nature) has the reaction that that's foolishness. When you talk about a person being saved apart from human doing, the first reaction of the human mind is, "That's foolishness." When you say that a person can be saved without taking the Lord's Supper, or water baptism, or circumcision, or any other kind of religious ritual, the human mind says, "No, that's wrong. That's foolishness. That doesn't make sense."

Interestingly enough, that's exactly what the Word of God recognizes that the unbeliever is going to say. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us who are saved, it is the power of God." And by "the preaching of the cross," Paul means the kind of cross-preaching that he preached, which was justification on the basis of what God has supplied through His Son, apart from human doing.

So, the human problem is monumental when we come to think about how a person is going to go to heaven. Everything is against us. We cannot think God's thoughts. We come out in a way that is contrary to what God has designed as the way of salvation. We are in rebellion against His thinking. When we do hear the truth, we call it foolishness. And the way that makes sense to us, the Bible tells us, is going to lead us straight into the eternal death of the lake of fire.

**Sincerity**

So, what do most people fall back upon? Most people fall back upon the most terrible word in the human language: "sincerity." Most people fall back upon sincerity to carry them through with God. I don't know whether you've had the experiences I've had of having people look you in the eye, and with great emotion, say to you, after you have pushed them to the point where you have said, "It is what the content of the Word of God has expressed, and if you're not right with that content, you will be destroyed." And after you have pushed them to that point, they will look at you and say, "Do you mean to tell me that when I'm looking to God and saying, 'Please keep me from doing the wrong thing, and please keep me from making a mistake, that He's going to let me do it?"

I've always looked right back and said, "Boy, you betcha He's going to let you do it, because you're trusting in your sincerity to carry you through. And God says, "I give you the guidance of the divine viewpoint of My Word.

You know, there are some people think that you won't marry the wrong man or the wrong woman if you're sincere. Sincerity has made more lousy marriages than anything in the world. And I mean among Christians. That is because Christians are going and they're saying, "Lord, if this is wrong, You won't let me do it, will You? I'm counting on you, Lord. You keep me from doing it." And the Lord is standing up in heaven saying, "Read the divine viewpoint principles in the Bible, dummy. I've already given you your guidance. Your sincerity doesn't impress Me. And I'm not going to keep you from marrying the wrong person because of your sincerity, and the fact that you're counting on Me and looking to Me. It is My Word under the leading of the Holy Spirit that is going to preserve you.

That's why these teenagers have a hard time understanding that what the Bible says is what they must do. What the Bible says, that's what they must obey.

Every now and then they show that television program called "The Bible." It was a movie, really, and they show it on television. They did it again recently. I always loved that scene where Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac turns to his father, and Isaac realizes that his father is going to sacrifice him, and that he is the sacrifice. He looks to his father and he says, "Do we do everything that He tells us to?" And Abraham looks at Isaac and says, "Yes, everything. Whatever he says."

There you have man in his finest moments, realizing that it is God, and God alone, who can guide us. It is God, and God alone, who can bring out our humanity, and keep us from being barnyard animals. And it is God, and God alone, who can lead us into the finest that we are capable of, and the blessing for which He has designed us. Yes, whatever he tells us, that will we do.

Instead, it is whatever we are sincere about – that we will do. Whatever we just feel is the thing we should do – that we will do. You'll get yourself into all kinds of miseries in your life if you do not act upon what God has said in the Word of God. That's why knowing doctrinal principles is the most important thing in a human being's life. Whatever else you have, and whatever else you know, that's what you know. So, when you learn Bible doctrine principles, and then you get into some relationship, and you see that something is out of kilter; that something is offbeat; or, that something does not fit, then don't keep pushing it. That's God shouting from heaven, "Get out of it."

If a woman meets a man, and this man wants a leader into immorality; into an immoral relationship; and, into an evil relationship that the Word of God condemns us, she's a six-way idiot, especially if she's a Christian, not to cut herself off immediately, not recognizing that this person is the most dangerous creature that she has ever had anything to do with. She does not realize that he will destroy her soul, and he will destroy all of her potential for all eternity, because he's willing to violate a principle of the Word of God. And if you're in that kind of a situation, I'd suggest that you cut yourself off in a hurry.

Sincerity is filling hell by the carloads today, and it is the thing that Satan is using above all else to trap people into error – sincerity.

It is the sincerity of the Mormons in their belief, and in their false Scriptures, which is taking them into the lake of fire. The Mormons constantly express their sincerity of their belief. One recently looked at me and said, "I have prayed about this." They always put their hands over their hearts like this: "I have prayed about this, and I know that the Book of Mormon is true." And it's as false a false statement from Satan as he ever made. But their sincerity is what they're counting on.

It is the sincerity of the charismatics and their heretical beliefs about the Holy Spirit; about the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and, about spiritual gifts, which is robbing them of rewards in heaven – and many of them, even of their salvation. It is the sincerity of our government leaders which pours forth a stream of human good evil which is stifling the prosperity of our country.

It is sincerity which enabled a communist preacher to lead 912 followers to suicide in Guyana. It was sincerity that created that horror that you've been listening to on your television sets. It was sincerity of those people that did it. We saw the pathetic sight of that one mother who is sitting there weeping and crying as the reporters were interviewing her, because her husband and her daughters (her older children) had already gone over to Guyana, and she was going to follow them. And they were all dead now. And she was sitting there crying and dabbing her eyes, and she said, "And all we wanted to do was to create a better world. She was sincere to create a better world to bring in communism. Well, she's sincerely dumb if she thinks that communism brings in a better world.

But the point is, sincerity was her motivation. And the devil has given her a marvelous Christmas present for her sincerity. Sincere faith in the teachings of a preacher, apart from your personal verification with Scripture, will cause you to lose your soul and your rewards. Sincere faith in some preacher you may trust (unless you verify from Scripture as the Bereans of old did) will cost you your rewards in heaven, and it may cost you your soul. It is the sincere faith that many people have in their preachers who tell them to trust in Christ as Savior, and then add something else to it of their own doing, that has caused them to lose their souls and to go into eternal death. It is their sincere faith in those preachers.

So, I hope you will become careful to recognize that sincerity is dangerous. The Bible does talk, and does commend, a sincere faith, but it's a faith in the Word of God. It's a faith that's based upon the principles of doctrine. If your sincerity flows from, and is structured upon, doctrine, then that sincerity will carry you to blessing. Then that sincerity is indeed integrity. But unless that sincerity is based upon doctrine, it does not contain the integrity that God demands. And our God only works from the frame of reference of His integrity. And if you think you're going to get anything else out of Him in any other way, you're kidding yourself. If you think that you can go ahead with evil that our society tolerates, of one kind of another, and that your sincerity is going to carry you through, you're mistaken. You will pay, and you will pay dearly, for it. Sincerity is the devil's game. And unless devotion is based upon the Word of God (upon doctrinal principles), your sincerity is meaningless.

No matter how evil a person is, God's grace is greater than all he does. Since Adam's fall, Satan has ruled the world. He's done this via the old sin nature which is in mankind. The old sin nature completely controls an unbeliever, and it produces evil. It produces evil of two kinds. The Bible presents two kinds of evil. One is sins – violations of the rules of God; and, the other is our righteousnesses which are human good, both of which flow from the old sin nature. Therefore, both are evil.

When you're an unbeliever, you are completely under the domination of the old sin nature. You are under its sovereign control. And that's what Paul has indicated as being under the reign of death. And sin exercises this reign of death over every unbelieving human being.

Now, once the person trusts in Jesus Christ as Savior without sincerely adding some good works or some religious ritual, then the power of the old sin nature over him is broken, though it is not removed. It cannot be removed because it's in the genes of all the cells of your body. The old sin nature has been genetically transferred to you. It resides in your physical body genetically. Therefore, it cannot be removed until you have a glorified resurrection body where all of that has been cleansed out. But the power (the sovereign ruling authority) of the old sin nature over you has been broken.

That's what Paul means when he says in verse 2: "God forbid. How shall we that died to the old sin nature live any longer in it?" You'll notice that the apostle Paul did not say that the old sin nature died. It said that the believer died to the old sin nature. Oh, the old sin nature is alive and well. It's kicking. It is fully functioning. It is fully operational. While its authority over the believer is broken, it is not dead. What has happened is that the Christian has entered a lion tamer's relationship with the old sin nature. The Christian is like being in a cage full of lions. And he has his chair, and he has his whip. He has God the Holy Spirit in one hand, and he has the whip of the Word of God in the other hand. And he's walking around, and the old sin nature is like a lion – just moving around there, trying to find an opportunity to pounce upon him. And the Christian has the chair there, of God the Holy Spirit, and he shoves it at the lion, and cracks the Word of God, and the lion of the old sin nature reels back, and it cuddles down, and it just glowers at him.

From the day that you're born-again, you become a lion tamer. That's the name of the game. You have your own lion-taming act. Now, if you've ever been to a circus, you know that the one thing that the lion tamer doesn't do is turn his back on the lions. He doesn't turn his back on them. When he does, he switches his eyes in the back of his head. He's still watching them. Every now and then, maybe a lion tamer does get careless, and he loses his point of control over his animals, and gets pounced upon.

Now, that's what you're facing. You have authority over the lion of the old sin nature in you. It was a time when you didn't. There was a time when you were in the condition of the Christians who were put in the arena in the old Roman Empire in the Colosseum. And the doors were opened, and the lions were permitted to thunder out, and the Christians stood there helpless. And they were just gobbled up and clawed and chewed to pieces. That's the way you were when you were an unbeliever. Every time the lion of the old sin nature decided to make a move, you couldn't do anything but stand there and be bruised.

However, you're not that anymore. You have become the lion tamer now through the Spirit of God who indwells you, and through the authority of the Word of God which you possess. So, now you can control what the old sin nature does, providing you want to. Or you can let the thing eat you up, and claw you, providing you choose to do that.

**God's Grace**

So, that's what Paul means in verse 2. He says, "We died to the old sin nature." And when you're dead to something, it no longer has sovereign authority over you. God's grace has therefore provided for every believer all that he needs to develop control over the old sin nature, which no longer has sovereign authority over him. Spiritual maturity through Bible doctrine is the means of providing control over the sin nature. And that's one of the things that the grace of God gives us. And I'm not going to go into the details, but you just run through your mind what the grace of God provided to make it possible for you to be right here where you are now, under the tremendous opportunity of getting insights and understanding of the Word of God – from the fact that there's enough sugar energy in your body to enable you to walk in here, and to sit down, and to keep your brain functioning so you can think and you can be alert, and you know what's going on; to the car that you drove here; to the job that God gave you to buy that car; to everything back down the line. That's grace all the way. He brought all the pieces together to put you right in this moment of time where you are hearing what you need for your eternal welfare and blessing.

**Satan Entices Us**

Now, God's grace provides thus for us because we're in the devil's world, and because he is the dominant force. And the devil is giving out instructions to your old sin nature. He's trying to entice you through your old sin nature. So, the devil and his agents are constantly figuring out ways to entice you through the old sin nature. What's your weakness? They know what you want. Is it money you want? Satan says, "OK, through the old sin nature, we'll give you that kind of enticement in the life of the Christian. We'll eat you up that way." Is it fame you want? We'll eat you up that way? Is it sex you want? We'll eat you up that way. Whatever it is that you're pursuing, Satan will say to your old sin nature, "We'll give it to you. We'll entice you."

**Sanctification**

To resist that requires the provisions of the grace of God. You can ignore those provisions, or you can strengthen yourself to the point where your lifestyle can constantly be that of the lion tamer who controls the lion. Neutralizing the effects of the old sin nature is called sanctification. That's the divine viewpoint lifestyle. When the old sin nature is neutralized, that is sanctification. Sanctification is the capacity to receive God's blessings in time, and His rewards in eternity.

So, we are dealing with a very important subject. If you do not know how to be a sanctified Christian, you will not be a Christian who receives blessings from God now or in eternity. You will not receive those unique blessings that belong to you as a Christian, not just the common grace of God that goes to all men – believe or unbeliever; and, the common rain that falls upon the fields of the believer or unbeliever, but also the unique blessings that belong to you as a believer. Unless you are sanctified person, they'll never come to you.

So, when we talk about a carnal Christian, we're talking about a person who is controlled by the old sin nature. He lives a human viewpoint lifestyle. Justification breaks the absolute rule of the old sin nature over a believer, and Paul has described this with these words: that "the Christian died to sin" at the point that he trusted in Christ. All evil has been paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross. So, there's no way that the old sin nature can again regain absolute sovereign authority over the life of the believer. If the old sin nature could ever regain absolute sovereign authority over your life, you'd be lost again. If a Christian could be lost again, that's what would be required. The old sin nature would have to return to the point where it was an absolute dominant authority over him – sovereign authority over the believer. And that, the Word of God indicates, can ever be.

Where sin through death once reigned supreme, Paul said that grace now reigns supreme, and nothing is going to remove the grace of God from the supreme authority over your life. Therefore, nothing is going to keep God from giving you the things that you need to be able to go on to spiritual maturity. It's only you mishandling what God gives you.

For this reason God the Holy Spirit indwells the body of a Christian to exercise control over his life; to give him guidance; to give him enablement; and, to give him the development necessary for God to be able to bless. Satan tries to influence the Christian through the old sin nature while the Holy Spirit is influencing him through his new living human spirit, filled with the divine viewpoint of Bible doctrine. The mechanics of this spirituality (you know very well) is expressed in 1 John 1:9. It is 1 John 1:9 that tells us how to remove the old sin nature from control, and how to place the Holy Spirit in control. The confession of known sins is described in the Bible as the filling of the Holy Spirit – the mechanics of spirituality, and the mechanics of controlling the old sin nature.

So, being a good Christian is not a matter of your works. It is a matter of being filled with the spirit. Your works will merely reflect the status of your soul. Human works and rituals do not secure salvation, and they don't secure spirituality. God glorifies Himself through what the Holy Spirit does through the Believer – not through what the Christian sincerely tries to do. Divine good production is the result of the status of spirituality. It is not the cause of spirituality. It is the result of the old sin nature being under control.

The divine order is this: that you go from salvation to spirituality, to spiritual maturity, to super grace status, which results in maximum divine good production and maximum divine blessing in life and in eternity – real success and real prosperity. That's the order of our life: salvation; then control over the old sin nature being exercised (salvation breaks the authority of the old sin nature); then on to spirituality (or sanctification) which controls the old sin nature; then on to spiritual maturity; and, then all the way to the top of maturity to super-grace level, and then there is maximum blessing pouring into your life until it overflows in super-grace abundance.

So, it's all a question of keeping the sin nature neutralized in the believer. And that begins by realizing that Christ died in order to break the absolute control of the sin nature over you. And that is what has happened.

So, when this opponent of salvation by grace says to Paul, "Well, in that case, if the more I sin (the more my sin nature is able to express itself), the greater is the abundance of God's grace, then I'll just let the sin nature express itself so that grace can super-abound the more. Paul says, "God forbid," which is a strong Greek idiom for "perish the thought.” That isn't what he is implying at all. Paul's answer to this suggestion is that that's an illogical suggestion because the Christian died to the sovereign control of the old sin nature at the point of salvation. The sin nature cannot now automatically chew up a Christian. He cannot automatically rule in the believer's life. He rules only by the negative volition choice of a carnal Christian.

**How did we Die to the Old Sin Nature?**

So, this raises the question of exactly how did we die to the old sin nature? First of all, let's look at some false views. They are so interpreted that they result in people being destroyed.

**Christians do not Become Sinless**

First of all, some people say that that means that a Christian becomes sinless. That's a false view. Christians have become sinless in their daily living; that is, they are entirely dead to the influence of the old sin nature. The power of the old sin nature, they say, cannot be exercised over them. But Paul did not say that the old sin nature died. He said that "we died to the old sin nature." But he didn't say that the old sin nature was no longer operational. Obviously, experience proves this false. And nothing is more pathetic than to talk to the people who believe that they can become sinless, and the kinds of games they play to explain the obvious sins in their lives – the obvious things that they do that are contrary to the Word of God. And they know it, and everybody else knows it. But once they have committed themselves to being sinless, then they have to explain it away in some other way.

I won't even go into this with you today. You wouldn't believe some of the inane ways that people explain away their sin when they have claimed that they're sinless. If a person is sinless, it wouldn't have made any sense for the apostle Paul to say the kinds of things that he did in verse 11-13, which are coming up in this chapter. In verses 11-13, the apostle Paul says, "Don't let your physical body be used for sinning (for immorality). Just don't do it. Don't yield the members of your body to unrighteousness." Now why in the world, would he have to say a thing like that if a Christian, by his new birth, had become sinless; that is, the old sin nature died in him? Why would he have to tell a Christian, "Don't be guilty of sexual immorality," unless a Christian could be guilty of that. That is stupid; costly; degrading; barnyard animals; and, all that. Obviously, he's not sinless. That's why Paul had to say that. If a person is sinless, then Paul doesn't have to admonish him not to permit his body to be used for immoral purposes. So, that's one false interpretation.

**This is not an Appeal to what we Ought to Be**

A second is that this is not actually saying that a Christian is dead to the old sin nature, but that he ought to be. It's not saying that he is dead to the old sin nature, but that he ought to be. It is viewed as an appeal to Christians to live up to the ideal of sinlessness – that Christians should try to live up to the concept of sinlessness. But you remember that the word "died," that we have in verse 2, was in the aorist tense. Aorist tense indicates a point in time. That means that the Christian died in the past to the old sin nature – not that he ought to proceed to try to die in the future.

So, that tense tells you that this is wrong. It is not an appeal to what a Christian ought to be. Paul is declaring something that is already true about every believer. You are dead to the authority of the old sin nature. That's what this aorist tense us. So, this is not an appeal to what we ought to be. That's a false interpretation.

**Christians are not Dying More and More to the Sin Nature Each Day**

A third false interpretation is that Christians are dying more and more to the sin nature each day, so how can they live in sin any longer? Christians are dying daily to sin, so how can they sin any longer? So, we have this business of daily dying. One expression of this is self-crucifixion. There are groups of Christians who love to meditate about how to crucify themselves. And they go through various procedures to crucify themselves. Ladies groups like to get together and share ways in which they may crucify themselves, in the process of which they crucify most other people.

Well, the apostle Paul here again is not talking about something that day-by-day, more-and-more, we're doing. This aorist tense again comes in here and says, "We are not gradually dying to the power of the old sin nature. You died to it. You're not gradually going to come to the point of death. You are there. All you have to do is recognize that. All you have to do is reckon that on the basis of the Word of God to already be your condition. Now start acting upon it. You've forgotten who you are. You're walking around like a beggar. You happen to be clothed in the royalty of the robes of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, because you're a member of the royal family of God now.

So, the aorist is tense is that it's finished, past, and died. The old sin nature no longer has sovereign authority over a believer as it once had. That's false – that you're dying gradually daily. That isn't what Paul means.

**Christians do not Declare a Renunciation of Sin**

A fourth false interpretation is that a Christian, by his very profession, is saying that he has renounced sin. A Christian has declared a renunciation of sin. So, he comes to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Why? Because he's a sinner. He is doomed to eternal punishment. So, why does he come to Christ? He comes because he believes that that's bad. And he wants to stop the sinning. He wants to remove himself from that. He wants to renounce sin.

Some people say, "Well, when Paul says, 'We died to sin,' he is saying that we have made a formal declaration that we're through with the stuff. The believer has seen how gross evil is, and he wants no more of it.'" How can such a person be willing to continue under the control of the old sin nature? That's a contradiction in his renunciation. That would contradict his expressed, declared purpose.

However, this ignores the unique position of the believer in Christ, and thus, as one who has died with Christ on the cross of the old sin nature. It is not because you and I make a formal declaration that we're through with sin. It doesn't matter whether you make that declaration or not. It didn't matter whether you renounced or not. When you received Christ as Savior, you were placed into Christ. And when you were placed in Christ, the result of that was that the authority of the sin nature was broken over you. Therefore, everything that Christ did on the cross has come to your benefit. Because you are in Him, all that you did on the cross has come to your benefit. And here you are with the benefits of being in Christ.

Therefore, you are dead to sin, apart from whether you declare it or not. So, Paul is not talking about renouncing sinning, but he's stressing what's already been done for the believer in the old sin nature. So, that would be a false interpretation.

**Christians are Dead to the Power and Authority of the Old Sin Nature**

A fifth one is that the Christian has died to the guilt of the old sin nature. As far as guilt and punishment are concerned, this view says, they are past for a Christian. The old sin nature cannot touch a Christian and bring him into a lost condition again. OK, that's true, as far as it goes. The old sin nature can never bring you into a lost condition. Guilt and punishment are gone, but there's a good deal more in what Paul has said here. Paul has said that we are not only removed from the guilt and the punishment, but Paul says, "You are dead to the power. You're dead to the authority. The whip of the old sin nature no longer can be exercised over you.

So, Paul is saying a good deal more than that your guilt and your punishment have been removed. That's true, but it's more than that. It is your being under the domination – helpless under the old sin nature. That's what has been removed. And that's the thing that Paul is stressing in your daily life. This view is simply trying to prevent the idea that we have no laws – antinomianism. That means no laws to rule, and no laws to control. But the opposite of being out from under the control of the old sin nature (and not from the Mosaic Law) is not to be an outlaw, but to be under the control of God the Holy Spirit who now controls you. So, this is a very false notion too.

All right, what's the right one? Paul says that the Christian died to the old sin nature's sovereign power and authority over him. Romans 5:21 declares that the Christian died to the reign of the old sin nature in his life – not just to the guilt of it. Death once reigned through the old sin nature. Now grace reigns through the absolute righteousness unto eternal life. This death of the believer to the old sin nature is irreversible by man.

**Mankind cannot Reverse Death**

I want to tell you right now that mankind does not have the power to reverse death. The ultimate expression of the gift of healing in the New Testament was to raise a person from the dead. And on occasion, those who had the gift of healing exercised in that way. The charismatics who blubber so much about having the gift of healing can never raise a person from the dead. It is very painful to them when you confront them, and say, "OK, if you have the gift of healing, then just raise someone from the dead, and settle the question.

I told you about the man out in California in Calvary Chapel who got up and said that the first three times he exercised his gift of healing on people, they died. And he wondered about that. And then the Lord told him that the finest expression of the gift of healing was for a person to die, because all of his illnesses have been removed then. And the thing I found interesting was that he kept a straight face when he was saying it. I could hardly keep from laughing out loud: "The finest expression," the Lord told him, "of the gift of healing was when a person dies."

Well, I couldn't argue that the guy certainly is over his disease. I'll say that for him when he dies – that he had no more problems with it. I mean, I had to say, "Yeah, you know, that's right. A guy is really healed what he's got there." But that was not so in the New Testament. The finest expression was to raise someone from the dead – not to take him into death. And death is irreversible by man.

**God will never Reverse your Death to the Old Sin Nature**

Only God can reverse death. That's what I'm saying. Even with the person who had the gift of healing, only God was the one who was causing a dead person to rise. And God is not going to reverse your death to the old sin nature. Only God can reverse any kind of death, whether it's spiritual or physical. And God will never reverse your death to the old sin nature.

You're going to find this stated in these words when we get to Romans 8:33-39: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifies? Who is he that condemns? Shall Christ that died; yea, rather that He has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us? What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" When he says, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ," he means, "What shall separate us from the salvation that you have in Christ?

Verse 36: "As it is written, for your sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter; nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present; nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." God will never reverse your death to the old sin nature. Salvation, thus, can never be lost. It can never be reversed. You can never be unborn from the family of God. That would violate the very analogy of being born.

The reign of the old sin nature is at an end forever in the believer. The reign of grace has replaced it forever. And God will not permit His grace to be moved of authority in your life, and to be replaced again by the old sin nature. Grace does not lose what God has provided for the sinner through Jesus Christ. Grace is there to preserve it, and that's the reason it super-abounds.

**Positional Truth**

So, when Paul says that the Christian died to the old sin nature, it means that the Christian is out from under the sovereign authority of the old sin nature. This is a matter of positional truth. The Christian is in the position of being in Christ. What Paul is referring to here is a position. He is not under the absolute sovereignty of the old sin nature because of his position in Christ, which means everything that Christ is has been credited to his account, because Jesus Christ died to pay for sins. Since you are in Him, God says, "You died to pay for sins." That's why we say that you were on the cross with Jesus Christ. When the Bible says that Jesus Christ was buried as a result of that physical death and payment for sin, you were buried with Him. When it says, "Christ was resurrected in evidence that sin has been paid for," you were resurrected with him to prove that your sin had been paid for. Do you have the picture?

The whole relationship to Jesus Christ gives you benefits to what He has performed on the cross. Consequently, the reign of the old sin nature is at an end forever. And this is positional truth. But the old sin nature itself, while its sovereignty has been broken, has not been destroyed. You may choose to listen to it. You may choose to become a carnal Christian. And, of course, that's what Paul is leading up to in this chapter. It's going to be sanctification. He's going to talk about sinning. But Paul's point here is that every person is either under the absolute sovereignty of the old sin nature or under the absolute sovereignty of the grace of God. Everybody is under one sovereignty. But once a Christian has become a believer, he's no longer under the sovereignty of the old sin nature, but under the sovereignty of the grace of God. But because the old sin nature is still alive and active, the believer, unless he plays his role as a lion-tamer properly, will be injured by the old sin nature. You cannot be under two sovereign authorities. You have to be either under the sovereign authority of sin or under the sovereign authority of grace.

We have many scriptural confirmations. We'll close with just a couple. In Colossians 1:13, Paul says, "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." There has been a change. You cannot be under the authority of both darkness and light at the same time. So, you've been transferred from the reign of the old sin nature and death, to the reign of grace and absolute righteousness.

Take a look at Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me." There the declaration is turning from, again, the power of darkness to the power of light; and, from the power of Satan to the power of God. You cannot be under both at the same time.

Look at Philippians 3:2o: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." There was a time when your citizenship was right here in Satan's world, because you were under the dominant authority of Satan. That is no longer the case. Your citizenship is someplace else. You cannot truly have citizenship in two countries. Sometimes people hold dual citizenships, but that's an inherent contradiction, because citizenship implies absolute loyalty and absolute allegiance to one source. And you cannot have absolute allegiance to two sources.

Let's look at one more. In Ephesians 2:19, we read, "Now therefore, you are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Where once you an outsider from the family of God, you're now an insider.

The reign of grace and death to the reign of the old sin nature guarantees certain things. First it guarantees your final salvation – absolute certain salvation, because the old sin nature no longer has absolute reign, but grace does. Grace is going to carry you through. You know by now that you will not carry yourself through, but God's grace will carry you through.

Secondly, it also guarantees that you cannot continue living in sin subject to the old sin nature with its evil expressions. I hope all you good Christians are listening. The fact that the reign of the old sin nature has been broken in your life ensures that you will not get away with living in evil: that God will bring judgment upon you; that He will bring discipline upon you; He will start picking your life apart; and, He will start breaking it up piece-by-piece until you find yourself standing in a shattered mess. Because grace reigns, and the reign of the old sin nature has been broken in your life, you cannot continue living in subjection as a believer to the old sin nature.

A third point that this guarantees is that the Christian's will has been free to choose godliness by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not tolerate carnality in a Christian, which suggests that the old sin nature still has sovereign control of a child of God. That's one of the results of being born-again – one of the results of the reign of grace in the life of a child of God. You're no longer a slave. You're a lion tamer. Bring the lion under control.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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