

With His Stripes

What does it mean to be
crucified with Christ?

Bill Pinto

EARTHEN VESSELS
2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

www.earthenvessels.org.au

Chapter 1

The book of Hebrews contains a verse that can only be understood in light of the heavenly sanctuary; the high-priestly ministry of Christ; and the atonement. As such, this verse is particularly endearing to historical Seventh-day Adventists:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. *Hebrews 9:28*

It's true that the sinner finds forgiveness and pardon at the cross. However, our sins remain on record until the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, which signifies the end of the judgement and the soon coming of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul is referring to when he describes Christ's second coming as being "without sin". Christ cannot return until the record of sin has been cleansed from the heavenly sanctuary. Only then can Christ "appear the second time without sin" and bring salvation to those who have been looking for Him.

So what needs to take place in order for the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed?

All sin must be cleansed from the hearts of those living at the end of time. Indeed, as Christ is working to cleanse His people from sin, the believer on earth is to be cooperating with this work.

Not coincidentally, the cleansing of the record of sin from the heavenly sanctuary is closely connected with the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. Consider God's instruction to the priests concerning this event:

For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.

It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. *Leviticus 16:30-31*

The typical Day of Atonement was the one day in the year when the record of sin was cleansed from the earthly sanctuary, "so that [one] might be clean from all [their] sins before the Lord". Hence, the people were to afflict their souls and follow specific instructions:

And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath. *Leviticus 23:28,32*

While the priest was accomplishing this cleansing work, the believer—through faith in the high priest—was to be afflicting his soul.

What does it mean to afflict one's soul? *The Strong's Concordance* describes it as the abasement of oneself. It is to humble self, submit self, and chasten self. Knowing that their selfish nature was leading them to sin, God's people were to be surrendering all selfishness—humbling their souls and expressing sorrow for their sins—in order to cooperate with the work which the high priest was accomplishing. As for those who would not afflict their souls, the law declared:

For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.
Leviticus 23:29

Similarly, in the context of the anti-typical Day of Atonement, Hebrews 9:28 describes a people who “look for him”, their High Priest and Saviour. This class are also outside the sanctuary afflicting their souls. As Jesus, their High Priest, is making atonement for them and cleansing them from sin, these godly few are abasing and humbling themselves, cooperating with the work which Christ is accomplishing in heaven.

Why is this important?

Right now, Christ is in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, ministering as our High Priest and making atonement for our sins. Yet as Paul revealed, Christ is going to return *without sin* unto salvation. The record of sin will be cleansed. And then, those who are not cooperating with Christ’s work by afflicting their souls and humbling themselves will be cut off from the congregation. That’s why in Hebrews 9:28, Paul describes a people “that *look* for him”. These souls who are looking to Christ are afflicting themselves. And they are the ones for whom Christ will appear the second time. Certainly, they are following God’s will in every aspect of their lives. They are surrendering self and manifesting faith in Christ.

So how does the record of sin arrive in the heavenly sanctuary? Let us first consider the earthly sanctuary, which God provided as a type, or representation, of the sanctuary in heaven.

There were a variety of ways by which the record of sin could be transferred to the earthly sanctuary, depending on the person and the type of sin committed. For example, in the case of a priest (“the assembly of the holy”), the priests or the elders of the congregation were instructed to take a bullock for a sin offering. Leviticus 4:6 outlines what the priest had to

do with that animal sacrifice:

And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the vail of the sanctuary. *Leviticus 4:6*

Once the sin was confessed on the sacrifice, the animal was killed (bearing that sin), and the blood was sprinkled before the veil in the sanctuary. The record of sin was thus transferred from the priest to the sacrifice and finally to the sanctuary.

Further instruction is given in verses 14-17, where circumstance required the congregation to offer a bullock for their sin:

When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord: and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.

And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation:

And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, even before the vail. *Leviticus 4:14-17*

Once again we see how the record of sin could be transferred to the earthly sanctuary. The following passage reveals another way that the record of sin could be transferred; by eating the offering in the holy place.

Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy.

The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. *Leviticus 6:25-26*

Whether by sprinkling the blood before the veil, or by eating the sin offering in the holy place, the record of sin would be transferred to the sanctuary. Then, on the Day of Atonement, the priest would cleanse the earthly sanctuary of the record of sin which had accumulated during the past year.

It's important to note that these various methods which God gave to Moses were to be followed strictly and solemnly. As *Leviticus 10* reveals, for a priest to disobey these orders was to invoke direct and sudden punishment from God. Consider Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who were immediately destroyed for offering a strange fire to the Lord which He had not commanded. As the story continues, we find that Aaron and his other two sons, Eleazar, and Ithamar, were to continue working in the sanctuary that same day according to God's explicit instruction.

And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy:

And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire: for so I am commanded. *Leviticus 10:12-13*

Through Moses, God instructed the priests to continue their work. In fact, the earlier verses reveal that they were not even allowed to mourn the death of Nadab and Abihu or else they would die. Rather, in respect for the sacredness of the work of atonement, they were commanded to eat the sin offering in the holy place. After passing on this instruction, Moses returned to see whether Aaron and his sons had

obeyed the Lord's commandment:

And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying,

Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?

Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded. *Leviticus 10:16-18*

The role of the priests—typifying the work of Christ—was to eat the sin offering in the holy place because that's how they would bear the iniquity of the congregation, and hence make atonement for them before the Lord. Although Aaron's reason for not doing so was accepted in this instance—as verses 19-20 show—this story reveals the criticality which attended the work of atonement in the Old Testament.

By bearing the iniquity of the congregation, the priest was making atonement for the people. This is the work which Christ is accomplishing in heaven. Even now, He is bearing our sins before the Father and making atonement for His people. When that work is finished, Christ will return “without sin” unto salvation; no more bearing the iniquity of the congregation. Furthermore, since the priests were to bear the sins of the people, notice what sort of person a priest had to be:

And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses. *Leviticus 10:7*

The anointing of priests was a very serious matter. Since

the priest was a type of Christ, he had to be holy:

And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; *Leviticus 10:10*

That's exactly why Nadab and Abihu were struck down. They treated something which was holy as though it were common. God could not accept that service. Although the priests were mortal men, they were representing Christ; the true High Priest who is holy and without sin.

In Leviticus 21, qualifications are given for members of the priesthood. Of the high priest it is said:

And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;

Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the Lord. *Leviticus 21:10,12*

It's important to consider that not all Levites could minister in the holy place. Certain physical, mental and spiritual criteria had to be met. To be anointed as a priest was a very serious matter because the priest was representing Christ. They were not to live in a common way as other people lived but were set aside for a particular purpose. The following passage explains one of the physical qualifications which a priest had to meet:

No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.

Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them. *Leviticus*

21:21,23

God was not discriminating against a man's appearance for the purpose of vanity. Rather, these criteria were given in order to reveal the holiness of the priest's work in every regard.

In Hebrews 7:26, Paul describes Jesus and says:

For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; *Hebrews 7:26*

When a priest received the anointing oil, he were representing Christ; holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. It was only then that the priest could partake of the sacrifice and make atonement for the people. And since the priest was symbolically carrying the sins of the people, God provided specific instructions to cover every facet of his life.

Chapter 2

When a person sinned, they were to place their hand upon the animal sacrifice to symbolically transfer their sin to the animal. After the animal was killed, its blood was sprinkled upon the veil and altar in the sanctuary. In some cases, the priest would eat of the sacrifice, bearing the sins in the holy place.

Now there are two important questions. Who does the sacrifice represent? And who does the high priest represent?

They both represent Jesus. Both the sacrifice and the high priest are types of Christ. Consider the burnt offering as an example:

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. *Leviticus 1:4*

God accepts the burnt offering on behalf of the repentant sinner. As Moses writes, it is “accepted for him to make atonement for him”. It is Christ’s sacrifice which makes atonement for us. Yet that burnt offering was to burn continuously day and night; representing the ceaseless intercession of Christ for man. Notice what else is characterised by the high priest in the earthy sanctuary:

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually. *Exodus 28:30*

The names of the children of Israel were on the high priest's heart continually. This is also representative of Christ who bears our names before the Father in Heaven. Christ is representing those who are looking to Him and following Him by faith. And this is not something which the Son of God feels unemotional about. Your name is upon his heart. That's how much Christ wants to save you! Consider the illustration He gives through the prophet Isaiah:

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. *Isaiah 49:15*

To best portray His love for mankind, God draws from the greatest example of love in this world: a nursing mother. He then asks a question which one would not even consider asking: "Can a woman forget her sucking child?". A loving mother would do anything for her baby; she would even sacrifice her life for her child. Yet the Lord says that His love for you is infinitely greater. He says, "yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee". That's what it means for the high priest to wear the breastplate of the names of Israel upon his heart.

God then declares in the following verse:

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. *Isaiah 49:16*

Christ links Himself so closely with humanity that even though He is in heaven physically, we're told that He's just as present with us now as when He was walking on earth. He identifies with our sufferings, our sorrows, and our trials. And upon His heart are the names of spiritual Israel whom He

carries before the judgement. Then, being accepted before the Father, the people upon His heart are accepted in Him.

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. *Ephesians 1:6*

When Paul made this statement in the New Testament era, it would have especially resonated with the Jewish converts. The Jews understood the meaning behind the sanctuary service and the Day of Atonement. They understood that when the high priest came out from the most holy place, they were accepted in him, for the priest had borne their names before the judgement seat of God.

What does it mean to be accepted in the beloved?

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; *Ephesians 1:7*

To be accepted in the beloved is to have one's sins forgiven. This is the work which the high priest is engaged in as he bears the names of Israel upon his heart. He is seeking atonement for their sins.

In the same way, when the Father looks upon His Son (bearing your name upon His heart), you're accepted in Jesus and you receive forgiveness through His blood. Christ's sacrifice is presented on your behalf. That's why the people had to afflict their souls on the Day of Atonement. They had to confess their faith in Christ in order to be accepted in Christ. And through His blood, they would receive forgiveness of sins.

Christ is our representative before the Father in the heavenly sanctuary. However, He has been representing us His entire life. This applies not only to Christians, but to all men. Throughout His entire life—His sufferings, death, burial and resurrection—Jesus was representing all humanity. So when you dwell upon Christ's perfect life, think about Him living

out that life on your behalf. Whether he was suffering under trial or persecution, or even being crucified, Christ's obedience was for you. His suffering, death, resurrection, glorification, and intercession were all for you. That's the role which the earthly high priest was to reflect.

It's important to pay special attention to the kind of language the apostles use when speaking about Christ. Notice that they don't regard His sufferings as being separate from our own:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. *Romans 8:17*

Paul says, "if so be that we suffer *with* him". Jesus is no longer suffering personally like He was when He lived on this earth, yet Paul speaks in the present tense. He does this to show that the life which Jesus lived, He was living for each one of us. It is as though we were there in Him, suffering with Him. And thereby, Paul concludes, "we may be also glorified together". Consider also Romans 6:4:

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. *Romans 6:4*

Again Paul speaks in the present tense. Jesus was buried two thousand years ago, yet Paul speaks as though we were with Him when it happened. The only way that Christ's sacrifice can be legally accepted is if it's vicarious; if it's on our behalf. That's what the high priest was representing when he carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon his heart. We suffer with Christ, and we're buried with Christ. Now consider verse 8:

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: *Romans 6:8*

Christ certainly isn't dead. In this verse, Paul is referring to the death of the old man in baptism. He's saying that if we die with Christ in the waters of baptism, "we shall also live with him". The apostles described Christ's life, death, sufferings, and resurrection in the present tense to illustrate that we were there with him, going through the same experience:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. *Colossians 2:12*

The "operation of God" spoken of in this verse is the power of the Holy Spirit; the glory of the Father which raised up Jesus from the dead. Anyone who, by faith, is buried with Christ in baptism is raised by the same power; the glory of the Father. It is the operation of God. Once again, Paul describes us as being buried and risen with Christ in the present tense:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Colossians 3:1*

In Colossians 3:1, the cross becomes a very present event for the Christian. This is what the New Testament writers were continually emphasising. We aren't to look upon the cross as something which happened two thousand years ago, but as something that is very present in our lives. The moment a person is truly repentant, surrenders, and seeks forgiveness, they go through the experience which Christ endured. They die to sin, and they are risen to a new life with Him. The cross becomes a very present reality. Yet Christ was doing it on their behalf two thousand years before.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. *Colossians 3:4*

Compare this verse, Colossians 3:4, with the following

scripture, Hebrews 9:28:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. *Hebrews 9:28*

These verses highlight one central truth: Christ's life becomes our own. It's for this reason that when the apostle Paul was teaching righteousness by faith, he would say things like this:

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. *Romans 4:5*

Why is the faith of him that believeth counted for righteousness? Because the moment you believe on Jesus, His entire life is imputed to you. As Jesus bears your name before the Father, the Father sees none but that holy and undefiled One; the High Priest. That's all He sees. And your name is upon His bosom. As a result, the Father sees in you the perfect righteousness of His Son. This is why it is said that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10). It's not because of what one does, but what one believes.

The moment you truly accept Christ by faith, you receive His life. You receive His obedience, His righteousness, His death, His resurrection, and at the first resurrection, His glorification. That's why Paul says, "your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Your life doesn't appear anymore. It's the perfect life of Christ that He lived out on your behalf which the Father sees in the judgement. Christ carries your name upon His heart and atonement is made. That's why the apostle says, "he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

The only way that this can be legal is if everything Jesus did throughout His entire life—and not just on the cross—was done on behalf of all humanity. This is important because

if it's the cross alone that brings forgiveness of sins, Jesus could have come to earth incarnate as an adult, lived for but a few days, died on the cross, and returned to heaven. He would have paid for our sins. But would that have been enough? No. Christ's whole life had to be a sacrifice. The cross was simply the culmination of everything He'd done throughout His life. The sacrifice itself wouldn't have been enough. He was representing us every moment of His life on earth. That's why it is called a *vicarious* sacrifice.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines vicarious as that which is “performed or suffered by one person as a substitute for another or to the benefit or advantage of another: substitutionary”.

In light of this definition, any loving parent who makes great sacrifices for their child is living vicariously. Anyone who devotes themselves to hardship and self-sacrifice, perhaps in war or poverty, is living vicariously. It's a love that “seeketh not her own” (1 Corinthians 13:5). It's a self-sacrificing love; the very character of God reflected in one's heart.

Yet this has nothing to do with legal terms. One does not do something good for another person because its the right thing to do, but because its a natural response. It's a principle. A child's life is part of the parent's life. When the child suffers, the parent suffers. When the child is happy, the parent is happy. Their lives are connected. So if a parent sees their child in trouble, they don't stop to contemplate what they should do. Their helping response is automatic. It's natural. That's what living vicariously means. And this is how Christ lived His entire life on Earth. It was a natural impulse for Him to live for and to help others.

Indeed, God has endowed us with this affection so that we can better understand Him, His character, and His love for us. When someone you love is suffering, you cannot enjoy life while they're suffering. It's impossible.

Similarly, the Father and Son could not enjoy the peace of

heaven while beholding what was happening on earth. That would have been impossible because God is love.

I was very fortunate to grow up in a home where I experienced this love of vicarious devotion. Only days before my mother died, she was lying in a hospital bed with the frame of a skeleton, and the very last words she said to me were, “Bill, have you eaten?”

One would think that as a person approaches death, their thoughts would be towards themselves, and what’s about to happen to them. For my mother, it was still towards her children. To put me and my siblings first was natural to her.

This kind of love will sacrifice anything for a loved one. That’s why parents sacrifice themselves for their children. Jesus Himself said:

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. *John 15:13*

This verse reminds me of a story in the Old Testament. There came a point in the history of the rebellious nation of Israel when God sought to destroy His chosen people once and for all. Yet Moses turned to the God of heaven and said, “repent of this evil against thy people” (Exodus 32:12).

Amazing! Mortal man speaks to the Creator of the universe and tells God to repent. Incredibly, Moses was speaking from such an earnest love for Israel that God allowed the conversation to transpire. In fact, it was Christ Himself who was prompting Moses and speaking through him. Moses had so identified himself with the people of Israel that he would rather perish than see them be lost. He would not let them go.

That’s exactly how Jesus felt. Christ couldn’t remain in heaven while we were perishing on earth. Instead, the very moment Adam sinned, Christ said, “Let the punishment fall on me. I will stand in man’s place. He will have another chance” (Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, 75.3). When

Christ made that promise, it was on behalf of all mankind, not just the saved. And if Christ failed, then all humanity would have been lost. But with His success, all humanity could be saved.

Friends, no one needs to be lost. Jesus cast His lot with His people. He lived His entire life as a vicarious sacrifice for the good of others. There are so many verses on this point; here are just a few:

...Himself took our infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses.
Matthew 8:17

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...
Isaiah 53:4

But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5

But we see Jesus...that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. *Hebrews 2:9*

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree... *1 Peter 2:24*

Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance. *FLB 75.3*

When Christ made this promise, He connected Himself with us. And as the following verse highlights, He would not walk away from His word:

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
2 Corinthians 5:19

How can Christ reconcile you when you haven't even been born? At the point of the cross, there are still two thousand years of history to follow. Yet this verse states that you were

reconciled at the cross. That doesn't mean you were saved at the cross. But reconciliation was made for every human being, giving them the chance of salvation. How can this be so? The key is that you were *represented* in Jesus at the cross, just as the aforementioned verses show. That's how Christ could reconcile the world unto Himself; past and future. Everything Christ did was on our behalf. He took responsibility for the entire human race. Jesus breathed life into Adam and He took responsibility for Adam's posterity. That was part of the everlasting covenant which He had made with His Father.

For me, the simplest way to summarise the two covenants is this. In the old covenant spoken at Mt Sinai, Israel promised, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8). And it was their very words that caused them to fail. They thought that in their own strength they could obey God.

In the everlasting covenant—also known as the new covenant—Christ has promised to obey on our behalf. The Christian puts their faith in Him and He lives out His perfect life in them.

The first was a covenant of works which failed because man will always fail on his own. The second is founded in Christ who lived, died, and was resurrected on our behalf, and who offers His perfect life of obedience to each one of us:

...unto **us** a son is given... *Isaiah 9:6*

...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of **us** all.
Isaiah 53:6

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.
Matthew 1:21

For he hath made him [to be] sin for **us**...
2 Corinthians 5:21

Christ hath redeemed **us** from the curse of the law, being made a curse for **us**... *Galatians 3:13*

Chapter 3

The wondrous theme of Christ representing us recurs all throughout the Bible. In light of the many verses already shown, consider the following quotation from *The Desire of Ages*:

In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 117)

As this statement highlights, Christ's death on the cross alone would not have been enough. The payment for sins alone would have been insufficient. Jesus had to procure for you a life and power that would enable you to have victory in your conflicts with Satan. It's more than just paying for your sins. It's the power to save you from your sins that's so vital.

Look upon our precious Saviour suffering in the wilderness, bowing under the load of man's guilt, and enduring the keenest pangs of hunger...he was the Prince of heaven; but in man's behalf he became sin for the race. (Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, September 23, 1890 par. 3.)

When I first read this quote, I gained a new perspective of Christ's sufferings. I knew that on the *cross* Jesus received our sins and guilt, but this statement points to *the beginning of Jesus' ministry*, just after His baptism, as being a time when He was "bowing under the load of man's guilt". It's at this point that Sister White states, "in man's behalf he became sin for the race". Once Christ undertook the responsibility to save us, that guilt, woe, and hopelessness was pressing upon His soul continually.

He has borne every test imposed upon him. He failed not in the wilderness of temptation when he endured the pressure of Adam's guilt and that of his posterity. (Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 38.)

Christ was living and suffering vicariously for us long before calvary. Consider the following statement:

Sickness of Others Carried Vicariously

Christ alone was able to bear the afflictions of all the human family. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." He never bore disease in His own flesh, but He carried the sickness of others. When suffering humanity pressed about Him, He who was in the health of perfect manhood was as one afflicted with them. (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p.133)

How can we understand that Christ "carried the sickness of others" and yet was always without disease? It's only by understanding the relationship that exists between a parent and child. When a child is suffering, the parent may as well have that disease themselves. In many ways, it may pain the parent more than the child. That's what Sister White is talking about.

Just the fact that God made man in His own image and likeness tells us a lot about how He looks upon us, and how He suffers to see us deny or disobey Him. This statement is

a reality right now. Although the Son of God is in heaven, He is as much afflicted now as when He was walking upon earth.

Jesus identified Himself as one of us in every single way. He suffered with us; grieved with us; was acquainted with our sorrows and guilt; and He carried this burden all the way to the cross. Notice this next statement:

He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 753)

What do you think that anguish is referring to? That is the anguish of being lost; when mercy is no longer pleading for man. That's what Christ was feeling on the cross. In other words, He wasn't just dying the first death. What Jesus was going through on behalf of the human race was the death belonging to the unrepentant sinner. Christ was experiencing eternal death; the second death. For "He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal".

Sister White wisely comments that "to the believer, death is but a small matter" (DA 787). Satan has glorified death, and yet to the Christian, it bears no sting. In many ways, death is a rejoicing because there's no more suffering, and the believer dies with that beautiful, blessed hope. They know that death will seem to them as the blinking of an eye, and they will awake to see their Saviour returning to meet them in the clouds. It's a beautiful thing. But that's not the death Sister White describes Jesus as dying. Christ felt the anguish of being lost eternally; the wages of sin (Romans 6:23).

Tho innocent and undeserving of punishment, our Substitute and Surety was brought under the curse and condemnation that should have been ours. (Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, Dec 8, 1898)

What is the curse and condemnation that should have been ours? Eternal death. That's what Christ was brought under. That's what He was punished for as the representative of the fallen race, of you and I.

He must descend from heaven's purity and peace, its joy and glory and immortal life, and come in contact with the degradation of earth, to endure its sorrow, shame, and death. He was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin... (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 64)

The penalty of sin is eternal death. And Jesus was to take that penalty upon Himself.

The penalty of the transgression of God's law is death. Christ suffered death for man, and brought life and immortality to light by coming from the dead. (Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886)

We know that everyone is resurrected from the first death because it is only a sleep. Therefore, it has to be the death of eternal extinction that is spoken of in this passage. The transgression of God's law—the wages of sin—is eternal death. And that is the death which Christ suffered. He took that punishment upon Himself. Yet Christ conquered that condemnation in coming forth from the dead, and thus brought life and immortality to light.

The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 6:23.]... The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is the "second death" that is placed in contrast with everlasting life. (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1888 ed., p. 544)

Christ suffered the second death. That's why He couldn't see through the portals of the tomb. That's why hope did not

present itself in Him coming forth a conqueror. He felt His separation from God would be eternal. Christ was dying the fate of the sinner and receiving the sinner's punishment for the wages of sin.

When we truly understand this, we find that we're no longer under condemnation. Why? Because Jesus took it. There shouldn't be any more guilt. When by faith you accept Christ's vicarious life as your own—His suffering, obedience, death, and resurrection—then you accept His righteousness, and God imputes to you the righteousness of His Son.

But you have to believe it. You have to reckon that your old life died with Him as Paul states. It's not just your sins but your entire life that must die with Him. You have to believe that Jesus took upon Himself your sins, guilt, and condemnation. It's all part of believing by faith when you confess your sins and believe in Christ. It's not just a cliché. It means that you really believe your old life was killed and destroyed.

Remember that it was glorified humanity which came out of the tomb. So what happened to the life which suffered the curse of sin on the cross? It remained in the grave.

Christ was crucified....He was lying in Joseph's new tomb. Christ descended into the grave as our Sin-bearer, opening a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him as their personal Saviour. (Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 411)

It's imperative that we understand this point. What does Sister White mean when she says, "Christ descended into the grave as our Sin-bearer, opening a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him as their personal Saviour"?

At the cross, Jesus was bearing the sins of the world. In Isaiah 53:6 we read just that: "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The apostle Peter writes, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Sister White reveals that Christ took those sins from the

cross into the grave: “Christ descended into the grave as our Sin-bearer” (12MR 411). Yet she also declares that “Christ came forth from the tomb glorified” and there were no marks of sin upon Him (DA 780). So what happened to our sins?

The second half of the statement provides the answer. Christ opened “a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him”.

That’s why Paul says that we’re both buried with Christ in baptism, and risen with Him. Christ opened a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him. This is more than just forgiveness. Your old life should be completely buried at the cross. By faith you are to believe that the old man was crucified there with Him. With this in mind, Paul declares:

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:
2 Corinthians 5:14

Christ opened a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him. And since Christ died for all, you can believe that you died with Him on the cross. What does this mean in a practical sense? Notice the following verse:

And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. *2 Corinthians 5:15*

They which live “should not henceforth live unto themselves” because that old man is no longer alive. As a born-again Christian, you partake of a newness of life. You come out of the tomb—the watery grave—as a new person through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Remember Paul’s opening words in 2 Corinthians 5:14: “for the love of Christ constraints us”. We saw that it’s a natural response for a parent to make sacrifices for their child. When you contemplate what Jesus did for you His entire life, and you understand His love, that will constrain and compel

you to make sacrifices for Him. Because of the love of Christ in you, you won't want to do anything else but live for Him who died for you.

In other words, love begets love. If you do wrong to someone, do you receive love in return? No; you generally receive distrust, and possibly even resentment and hate. By the same token, when you do right and show love to someone, you receive love in return. You receive loyalty, appreciation and devotion. When you receive the love of Christ as Paul is explaining here, you will want to serve and live for Him in return. You will reciprocate the love that you've been shown. And when this principle governs your actions—as it does with the loving parent—it won't be difficult to live for Christ. It won't be difficult to forsake any besetting sin in your life because there's a much more powerful factor motivating you. Notice the following verse from the apostle Peter:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. *1 Peter 2:24*

Have you ever wondered why the apostles repeatedly connect our death to sin with Christ's death on the tree? The answer is because we were in Him when He died. Jesus was not just a substitute; He lived vicariously as part of us. Every wrong deed we have done, every wrong thought and all the guilt it brings was placed upon Him. And by His stripes—by an understanding of His life of suffering for us—we will be healed, and compelled by love to live for Him.

When you truly believe that you've been crucified with Christ, you're going to believe that you're dead to sin as Peter proclaims. You're going to believe that Jesus opened the grave not only for your sins but for the old man who committed them.

It's not enough for Jesus to die for your sins alone, because that old man will continue to sin. That old man has to be

crucified with Him, and left in the grave. The law of sin was condemned in His own body on the tree. It's by this power that you can live unto righteousness. That's why the apostle writes: "by whose stripes ye were healed".

In Isaiah 53, Isaiah is looking forward in prophecy and declares, "with his stripes we are healed". In 1 Peter 2, Peter looks back to the cross and states, "by whose stripes ye were healed". The apostles understood the power which was manifested at the cross. They understood that that's where they were healed.

Christ sacrificed everything for man in order that he might make a way whereby it would be possible for man to gain heaven. Now it is for fallen man to show what he will sacrifice on his own account for Christ's sake, that he may win immortal glory. (Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, September 23, 1890)

When we study the theme of the gospel and Christ's life of suffering for our sake, when we see how much He sacrificed for us, we can say with Paul that the love of Christ constrains us, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14). As Peter states, we should live unto righteousness.

Now it is for fallen man to show what he will sacrifice on his own account for Christ's sake, that he may win immortal glory. (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 481)

Yet as beautiful as this truth is, it's only realised in the hearts of a few:

A few, yes, only a few, of the vast number who people the earth will be saved unto life eternal, while the masses who have not perfected their souls in obeying the truth will be

appointed to the second death. While the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. (Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 213)

That's where we began in Hebrews 9:28, and that's where it ends. Sadly, only a few of the vast numbers are willing to accept what Jesus Christ has done for them and is still doing this very day.

Chapter 4

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. *Hebrew 9:28*

We have been studying this amazing text in light of Christ's vicarious life, death, and resurrection on our behalf. In this chapter, we will see how baptism makes this a personal and practical experience in the life.

Hebrews 9:28 points to the anti-typical Day of Atonement and the cleansing of sin from the heavenly sanctuary. When the record of sin is finally cleansed from the sanctuary, Jesus will return "without sin" to bring salvation to those who have been looking for him. At this point, Jesus declares:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. *Revelation 22:11*

These two verses (Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 22:11) teach that we each face a future judgement, and that our destiny is sealed upon our earthly death, or if we're still alive, when the Lord returns. In spite of this, churches falsely claim that our sins were blotted out at the cross. For the most part,

modern-day Christianity teaches that we were judged and saved at the cross. And since the cross represents one's baptism and decision for Christ, many Christians often refer to their baptismal day as the day in which they were saved.

From this principle error comes the false teaching of 'once saved, always saved'. This teaching removes the need for a final or future judgement, as well as the need for a heavenly sanctuary altogether. For if one were judged and saved eternally at the cross, what need would there be for a High Priest to minister in the heavenly sanctuary today? Or what need would there be for the sanctuary to be cleansed of sin before Christ returns?

Amazingly, this clear and simple truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary is unique to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. However, total victory over sin isn't believed or taught even in the SDA Conference Church.

Let me offer you an illustration. A sinner hears the gospel in the year 2015. He truly repents and receives forgiveness. He is baptised and henceforth believes that he has received salvation. After his baptism, the man doesn't sin as much, but he still sins. In 2018, the man dies.

With this type of gospel, what has the cross achieved? Nothing. The man was sinning before his baptism, and still sinning after it. In essence, this illustration portrays the evangelical teaching of being saved and judged at the cross or being 'once saved, always saved'. Unfortunately, this teaching has become the new theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Conference Church.

For years, Satan has been working to tear down the sanctuary message—first through Ballinger in Sister White's day, and then through Desmond Ford and many others—in an effort to destroy the cleansing of the record of sin in a person's life. What's ironic is that those who uphold this new theology do so because they claim that they're living under the new covenant. In reality, this new theology is exactly the same as

that practised under the sacrificial system of the old covenant! For in the old covenant, a sinner would bring a lamb to the sanctuary, confess his sin over the sacrifice and then return home. The next time he sinned he would sacrifice again, and this would be repeated time and time again because in and of himself, he could not stop sinning. The sacrifice was actually perpetuating sin. Consider what Paul has to say about the old covenant system:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. *Hebrews 10:1, 2, 11*

Paul states that a new covenant was to replace the old, which had waxed old and vanished away.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. *Hebrews 8:13*

The old covenant wasn't fulfilling God's purpose for His people. Nevertheless, there was no fault with the covenant itself. Remember that Christ Himself lived under the old covenant and yet He never sinned. In Hebrews 8:8, Paul clearly explains where the fault with the old covenant lay:

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: *Hebrews 8:8*

The problem with the old covenant was with the people. "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do," was their cry. Exodus 19:8. The people had determined to obey God in their own strength, and therein lay their downfall. This method couldn't perfect the worshipper and it certainly couldn't stop him from sinning.

The cross is looked upon in the same way today. Remember our illustration of the sinner. Once he hears the gospel, he truly repents, confesses his sins, and believes that he is saved. After accepting the cross, he doesn't lie or commit adultery anymore, and his life has certainly improved. He may even become charitable and devote much of his life to serving others. However, selfish tendencies are still indulged; sin isn't wholly subdued. Then one day he dies. Evangelicals believe that he is saved because his sins were paid for when he first accepted the message. They don't take into account that in his life self still ruled; the old man never died. He simply improved in some aspects of his life.

The great majority of Christians fall into this category. Irrespective of one's denomination, if there is still sin in a person's life, self is the ruling power. One might have given up some major sins, but perhaps there is still pride or even a disregard for God's health rules as revealed in the Bible. Remember, it is not the degree of deviation which constitutes sin, but the deviation itself which ensures the soul's ruin. Why? Because even the slightest compromise proves that self, and not love for Jesus, is the ruling power in the life. In such cases, the old man never died. He was baptized, but he was buried alive.

This is the danger of teaching that salvation takes place at the cross. By result of this false teaching, how many millions are going to wake up one thousand years too late, on the wrong side of the resurrection? Shocked and surprised, they'll say, "Lord, Lord...have we not...in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22). And Jesus will declare,

“I never knew you: depart from me ye that worketh iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). To be in this state is actually the Laodicean condition; people who think they are rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing. This illustration shows that what they went through was purely a form. Nevertheless, if Hebrews 9:27 is understood correctly, there is tremendous hope for the Christian.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: *Hebrews 9:27*

Your judgement doesn't take place after you receive Christ and confess your sins. Your judgement takes place after you die. It doesn't matter what you profess while you're alive because your life is still under probation, your sins are still on record, and you can turn one way or the other. Hence, judgement takes place after you die and not before hand. Knowing this is a good thing because it makes one more cautious and more understanding of their true standing before God.

In the illustration shared previously, the church would most likely claim that since the man had been improving he would be saved, and thus the poor sinner would have also believed that he was accepted in heaven and in need of nothing. When in reality, that man needed to know that he was a sinner and if he continued in sin then he was sure to be lost.

The immeasurable sacrifice of Christ cannot help anyone if they continue in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth. In fact, according to Hebrews 10:26-27, the cross is going to condemn that person; not save them.

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
Hebrews 10:26-27

What happens to a person who, after having received the knowledge of the gospel, continues wilfully in sin? “There remaineth no more sacrifice for his sins.” What does remain however, is a “certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries”. The man who sins wilfully after having received the cross is facing a fearful judgment and a fiery indignation. Clearly, he was not saved at the cross!

Friends, what more can God do for us when we profess to accept the gospel but keep on sinning? Paul answers this question in Hebrews 10:29:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace: *Hebrews 10:29*

Sinning wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth is a very fearful thing as Paul explains in the next verse:

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *Hebrews 10:30*

This false gospel of ‘once saved, always saved’ involves a person sinning before the cross and still sinning after it. Yet according to Hebrews 9:27, the soul is judged after they die, and so divine judgement pronounces him lost because right up until his death, he was still sinning!

Now let us take a look at the true gospel. Consider a man prior to conversion (before the cross). He is a sinner and his life is ruled by self. Some time later, he hears the gospel. He is aware of his condition and with a humble and contrite spirit repents. He confesses his sins and receives forgiveness. The old man truly dies. The person he was prior to that point no

longer lives. Christ's perfect life is now lived out in him. After the cross, he walks in newness of life, as we read in Romans 6:4:

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. *Romans 6:4*

After this man's death, his life is reviewed before the judgement and he's counted to be saved. This is the true gospel. It's very simple.

In Colossians 3:3 we read, "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God". This is true righteousness by faith. This is how the thief on the cross was saved. That man died on the cross well before his heart stopped beating. He received forgiveness and became a new man; one whose life was hid with Christ in God, even if for only a short time. Now consider Romans 8:11:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. *Romans 8:11*

Paul declares that the glory of the Father that raised up Jesus from the dead will also revive our bodies by His Spirit. This is the reason why after baptism, the sinner's life is not merely an improvement of the old, but a totally new creation.

Did you notice how Romans 8:11 compares the resurrection of Christ and the power He received, to the power the believer receives when he dies to self and is raised up in newness of life? Paul makes the same comparison in 1 Corinthians 6:14:

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. *1 Corinthians 6:14*

There are so many passages which expound upon this point. Indeed, God wants us to understand this beautiful truth, that He will raise us up by the same power that He raised up His Son, Jesus Christ.

When Christ raised up Lazarus from the dead, it was not only an illustration of the resurrection of the saints, but of the resurrection of the believer when he is born-again. In this instance also, the soul receives spiritual life, and the old life remains in the tomb. Sister White expands on this further in *The Desire of Ages*:

Loose him, and let him go...Lazarus is set free, and stands before the company, not as one emaciated from disease, and with feeble, tottering limbs, but as a man in the prime of life, and in the vigor of a noble manhood. His eyes beam with intelligence and with love for his Saviour. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 536)

The raising of Lazarus bears testimony to the power of the resurrection to recreate one free from the disease caused by sin and to restore energy, vigour, nobility, and love for Jesus in the heart. Everything which Jesus did for Lazarus in calling him forth from the tomb happens to the believer when he truly experiences conversion. He is restored with new vigour, intelligence, and noble desires, and most of all, he is renewed in knowledge and love for his Saviour. Just as Lazarus came forth from the grave free from disease, and walking in the vigour of noble manhood, so too does the repentant sinner come forth from the watery grave walking in the newness of life.

Interestingly, the Greek word for Lazarus is Eleazar. El means God and Azar means helped. Therefore, Lazarus translates to: 'one who is helped of God.' God also wants to help us, to resurrect us free from the defilement of sin.

What was it that raised Lazarus from the dead? It was the spoken word of Christ as shown in John 6:63. Jesus said:

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:
The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they
are life. *John 6:63*

The words which Jesus spoke gave new life to Lazarus' dead body. What was the new life? We find the answer in Romans 8:2:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. *Romans 8:2*

It was the life of Christ Jesus which Lazarus received. Paul also declared, "I'm crucified with Christ, yet I live; not I but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). The life of Christ is lived out in the repentant sinner and frees him from the old man, thus imparting "newness of life". However, you cannot experience this resurrection while the old man still lives. This is where most people are deceived.

Partaking of Christ's life has nothing to do with how long you've been in the church, how many mission trips you've been on, or how many sermons you've preached. So long as the old man is still alive, one will never experience what we are studying here regarding the resurrection. The old man must die before a new life can be given. This is a gospel truth and whether we agree with it or not, whether we believe it or not, that old man has to die if we are to be raised in the first resurrection.

Consider 1 Corinthians 15:36, where, speaking about the resurrection of the saints, Paul states, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die". Unless the old man dies, you cannot become a new creation. Notice what Jesus says in John 12:24-25:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that

hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.
John 12:24-25

In order for a plant to grow and bear fruit, a transformation must take place in the seed. In effect, the seed has to lose its life as a seed. You cannot have a plant while the seed remains in its ungerminated state. Similarly, so long as the old man is still alive, he cannot be born again into a new creation, and he will not come up in the first resurrection. Rather, he remains the same old man and will come up to die the second death. Jesus declared, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal”. We have to hate the life of sin we’ve lived. We must put it to death in order to have a new life both now and in the world to come. And death to this old man, to self, is a continual surrender; it’s not a one-off decision. It happens moment by moment. Notice what Paul proclaims in the following passage:

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. *2 Corinthians 4:10-11*

We have to keep the carnal nature surrendered in order for the life of Christ to be made manifest in our mortal bodies. Throughout this process, the will is the governing power. Both prior to and after conversion, this fact never changes. It’s not your nature which governs—because as we’ve seen in previous studies, your nature is not sin. The flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. It’s your will that keeps you surrendered.

As the Holy Spirit prompts your heart, you can choose not to return to your old way of life. Then, God will bless you with the power of the resurrection. Indeed, that same power which raised Jesus from the dead will raise you up to live

victoriously and bring honour to Him. Nevertheless, it's your will that decides. The evil thoughts and the evil deeds must be expelled and rejected. In the next three verses, notice how often Paul uses the word 'yield' in relation to the will and the decisions one makes:

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. *Romans 6:13*

This is the part we play. God provides the victory and the power, but its up to us to yield our will to Him. God created man with a free will, and He will never take that away. He will respect our free will whether it leads us to hell, or as He desires, to heaven. Friends, everyone who goes to heaven will be there because they willed it. We have the ability to choose eternal life. What amazing power God has placed in our hands!

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. *Romans 6:16, 19*

Every moment of each day, we are to yield our will to be servants of righteousness. Each day we are to surrender the old man and his deeds, ever dying with the Lord Jesus that His life may be made manifest in us.

Chapter 5

There is an important question which needs to be answered. When Jesus died on the cross, what else what put to death?

Our sins. The sins of everyone who has ever lived or will live were killed at the cross. This is what Paul is saying in Romans 6:10: “For in that he died, he died unto sin once”.

Jesus’ life of sacrifice, culminating at the cross, paid for every sin that has ever been committed. Yet Christ, the sinless One, didn’t just pay for our sins, He destroyed them. He came out of the tomb living for God His Father, just as He did before His death.

In Romans 8:3, we find that Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh”. This means that Jesus defeated sin. Sin was destroyed. For this reason, no one needs to be lost. And not only because our sins have been paid for, but because we no longer need to be servants to them. Although they are still on record because the sanctuary has not yet been cleansed, the power of your sins has been destroyed, and there is no need for them to enslave you any longer. All you need to do is give your will to the Saviour.

How did Jesus come forth out of the tomb? Were there any effects of sin upon Him? No. As we saw in the previous chapter, Jesus came forth glorified without the slightest im-

print of sin. Indeed, Jesus paid for and condemned the sins of all humanity, and he left them in the grave. The power of the resurrection was made manifest and glorified humanity came forth out of the portals of the tomb.

Of course, when Lazarus came forth from the tomb, he was still mortal; his fallen human nature hadn't changed. Yet he arose "as a man in the prime of life, and in the vigor of a noble manhood...[beaming] with intelligence and with love for his Saviour" (DA 536).

Although he was still fallen, Lazarus walked in the newness of life as a new creation. His resurrection typified the born-again experience.

Remember the words which John the Baptist spoke when he saw Jesus walking towards him:

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin [singular] of the world. *John 1:29*

At the cross, Jesus took away the sin of the entire world.

Think for a moment about the old man and his besetting sins, whatever they may be. Can you separate the man from his sins? No. Sin produces an evil character which in turn defines the person. In fact, a person is commonly named after his sins. A man who lies is known as a liar. One who slanders is known as slanderer. One who cheats is an adulterer. And one who kills is a murderer.

Sin forms a sinful character; it becomes who you are. That's why you can't separate the old man from his sins. You have to kill the old man, and when you do, you kill the sins which are part of him. A liar cannot lie after he dies. He cannot continue to live after the cross. There must be a new man in his place, or else you have the same problem as before. Or alternatively, you become like the Laodiceans, deceived into thinking that because you're sinning less, you're going to heaven.

So many people fall into this trap, believing that because they have good standards and do good things, they will be

saved. Their salvation is based on works. Yet they are no different to how they were before. They are still deviating from God's requirements in some areas, highlighting the fact that self still rules. Notice how the Bible connects the old man with his sins:

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.
Ephesians 4:22

The old man is corrupt and full of deceitful lusts. The sin and the sinner go together. The old man has to die. This fact is clearly stated in *Colossians 3:8-9*:

But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; *Colossians 3:8-9*

The old man and his deeds go together, and thus, they die together.

It's important to understand the relationship between the believer and Christ, particularly in terms of His crucifixion and resurrection. When the repentant sinner decides to go forward in baptism, he has to believe not only that his sins were paid for on the cross, but that his sins were crucified on the cross. *Romans 6:6* says just that:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. *Romans 6:6*

Baptism is a public testament to the fact that the old man and his deeds have been destroyed. This is achieved by faith in Christ, who destroyed sin through the crucifixion and resurrection. Figuratively speaking, being baptised into Christ means to be crucified with Him at Calvary.

The sins of all humanity were taken to Joseph's tomb, and

so it is that the old man and his deeds are buried in the waters of baptism and there is a new resurrection of life. That is why Christ declared, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Unless one is baptised, and in figure, pays for their sins with Christ on the tree, they will pay for their sins in the second death. None can escape the law of Romans 6:23: “the wages of sin is death”. As the prophet Ezekiel declared, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20).

Yet in Romans 6:6, Paul is teaching us that if a person experiences true conversion, then “our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”. This verse clearly proves that after conversion, the believer no longer needs to be a servant of sin. Again, that’s what Paul is declaring in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”.

Paul was living in Jesus’ time, and we are living some two thousand years after Jesus, but it makes no difference. In his book *Glad Tidings*, E.J. Waggoner strongly emphasises this point. We’re not to think of Calvary as being some distant event which took place two thousand years ago. Calvary is a very present thing to be experienced right now in your life. The dying of the body of the Lord Jesus is something that happens each moment of each day. Understand that He died for your sins, He destroyed your sins, and He is doing that for you right now.

Regardless of the sins you’ve committed in your life—whether you’ve been in prison or committed murder—Jesus died and your sins were destroyed. Sin doesn’t have to have any more power over you. Christ destroyed sin and you don’t have to serve it any longer. This is the good news of the gospel! By faith, the baptismal candidate believes that the old man and his deeds are crucified with Christ. That body of sin dies, and now there is a new person who with Paul can testify:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Can a dead person sin? Romans 6:7 states, “For he that is dead is freed from sin”. We need to think of our old selves as being dead. We must continually tell ourselves this. Remember, the author of positive thinking is God. The Bible is full of positive thinking.

Jesus met a corrupt, thieving tax collector but He saw good in that man, drew it out of him, and won that soul for eternity. Simon was a proud Pharisee who was continually judging others, yet Jesus saw the lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.

Jesus had the most beautiful quality of seeing good in someone and drawing that out of them. So how should we look upon others who have been created in God’s image, and who God Himself looks upon with so much potential?

We need to visualise the old man being dead and therefore acknowledge that he cannot sin any longer. As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:24, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”. Look how Paul describes it in Ephesians 2:10:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:10*

God ordained a life of victory for you from the moment you were born. He sees good in you. He sees the potential for you to be created in Christ Jesus in righteousness and holiness, “For as many of you as have been Baptised into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Let us now return to Romans 6:10:

For in that he died, he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. *Romans 6:10*

Paul’s usage of the word “once” in this verse is highly

significant. Jesus' sacrifice was enough to destroy sin forever, once and for all. He came out of the tomb without any of the effects of sin; He condemned sin in the flesh.

Today, and throughout all eternity, Christ lives for God and He lives for us. This is precisely the experience of the converted Christian as explained in the succeeding verse. Paul has just finished telling us how Jesus died unto sin *once and for all*, and how He lives for God, and the very next word he says is "likewise":

Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. *Romans 6:11*

The word "reckon" in this verse means to conclude; to consider yourself to be. Paul has told us that our sins were destroyed at the cross, that they were paid for, condemned, and destroyed. Likewise, he says, believe that you're also dead indeed unto sin and that you're now a new man living unto God. The very experience which Christ went through, He went through for us. When we believe this by faith we can experience the same life.

This is important because there are only two categories. You have the old man who is going to be lost and you have the new man who is going to be saved. There is no category in-between. It has nothing to do with religions, creeds, or anything else. Just two categories; the saved and the lost. If the old man remains, you're lost. If you experience the life of "the new man" until death, you're saved. The old man lives for self; the new man lives for others. The old man is corrupt, according to deceitful lusts. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness. Notice that Paul says *true* holiness.

I can't emphasize enough how transformative Romans 6:11 can be. Paul tells us to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin but alive to Jesus Christ. Now look at what he says in Romans 10:10:

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
Romans 10:10

Paul does not say to believe unto righteousness with your charitable works, or with your feeding of the poor. Rather, with your heart you believe unto righteousness and with your mouth confession is made unto salvation. You can experience this right now because it has nothing to do with what you do. Although it's works that prove your faith, I don't think there is another verse in the entire Bible that destroys the concept of righteousness by works like this one here. Salvation is based upon what you believe and what you confess.

Amazing! What you believe in your heart and what you confess with your mouth brings you righteousness and salvation, and then the works follow. That's why Paul says, "reckon yourself indeed to be dead unto sin". You have to believe it first, and then it will take place.

When my mother had less than a few weeks to live, I sat down with her in her home, just before we brought her to the hospital for the last time. There was almost nothing left of her. Mum asked me in Italian what she had to do to be right with God. There was no time for long or drawn out studies. She was very weak and didn't have the capacity to even think that much. But the question came from her. I wasn't even appealing to her. I knew that God was prompting her so I asked her if she believed that Jesus died for her sins. She said, "Yes". I then read her a single verse: Romans 10:10. The same verse that we have just been studying. I cannot think of a more wonderful verse in the entire Bible to read to anyone in this kind of situation, facing imminent death. I said to her, "Mum, with your heart you can believe unto righteousness, and with your mouth you can confess unto salvation". Only God knows what was in my mother's heart, but the experience imbued me with wonderful hope.

Friends, faith always comes before works. You have to first believe that the old man is dead to sin because that's what the

verse is saying. To reckon is to conclude, consider, or reason. The Bible is telling you to conclude that you are dead to sin, that your old self died on the cross completely, *once and for all*. Consider Romans 6:11 again and notice the emphasis that's used. Paul doesn't just implore you to reckon yourself dead, but "dead *indeed*" unto sin. Paul stresses this point immensely. Your part is to believe it.

Remember, there are only two categories. You're either the old man (which means you're lost), or you're the new man, recreated in Christ Jesus. If you reckon yourself to be dead indeed to sin, then what must follow? Romans 6:11 goes on to say that you are "alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Consider for a moment the thief on the cross. Visualise this man hanging upon a cross, dying as a criminal. He has broken both the moral and civil law and now stands on the brink of eternal damnation. As his weary body pulls on the nails in his hands, he recognises that he is worthy of the condemnation (Luke 23:41). "And now, all sin-polluted as it is, his life history is about to close" (DA 750).

The thief is about to meet his destiny and his life is polluted with sin. What can he do? He can't get down from the cross and start reforming his life. He can't make things right. At this point, all he can do is believe in his heart unto righteousness, as Romans 10:10 declares. He can't do anything else. All that the thief can do is believe. He has to reckon himself to be dead indeed to sin. He has to believe that he is a new man in righteousness because no thief is going to enter heaven.

And this, the thief does. He confesses his faith and he says, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

His faith saved him. Jesus promises this man in the next verse, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

That very moment, the thief stands before God as a new man, accepted in the Beloved. The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

The Bible is filled with accounts of Jesus turning the worst situations into eternal salvation. How amazing is the love of God! Notice what else Sister White says about the thief on the cross:

To the penitent thief came the perfect peace of acceptance with God. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 751)

Here is the most important thing to strive for in this life. It's not riches, land, popularity, or anything else. Strive to find this perfect peace for which there is no equal. The thief experienced it. His pain must have faded away when he found acceptance with God. What a wonderful, powerful gospel! There is no greater example of righteousness by faith than the thief on the cross.

When you truly believe Romans 6:11—that you're dead indeed unto sin—your focus will be heavenward. And this is what will keep you from turning back to the old man. Notice in the next three passages how the old man dies and the new man is risen with Christ. It is highly likely that Paul taught this truth more than anything else when he expounded the gospel. It's the reason he was so effective with the Gentiles. The following three verses are all found in Paul's letters to the Gentile churches:

If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
Colossians 3:1

That's where the power is, friends. Once the old man has died, your focus must remain on things above. Again in verse 2, Paul writes:

Set your affection [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth. *Colossians 3:2*

Place your attention on heaven; not on this earth. How often do you see the attention of professed Christians being directed towards the things of this earth, whether it be money or a host of other things? True Christians will keep their focus on Christ. And when you are raised with Christ, Paul proclaims:

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
Colossians 3:3

Once again we see that the old man is dead. He is not in the process of dying. He has not disappeared for a while. The old man is no more. Your life is now hid with Christ in God and you're looking heavenward.

Do you know why Paul uses the concept of being hid with Christ? When you hide something, it's safe and can't be stolen. When your life is hidden with Christ, no one can take it away. Jesus says in John 10:29, "no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand". No man can pluck *you* out of the Father's hand. Jesus says that His Father is greater than Him and that your life is hid with Him in God. In 1 Corinthians 3:23, Paul declares: "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's".

When we surrender our lives to God, and truly believe that we are dead indeed unto sin, we start to experience a new life with Christ living in us. Then, our life "is hid with Christ in God" and no man can pluck us out of His Father's hand.



www.earthenvessels.org.au
info@earthenvessels.org.au