

## “Grace & Peace to You”

# A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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## ROMANS LESSON 35 PART 1: “DEAD BUT ALIVE”

***Romans 6:1-11*** *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

### **A Courtroom Drama: “I Object!”**

Paul had just declared in **ROM 5:20** *“Now the law came-in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more...”* and he can already hear those “opponents of grace” throwing their sarcastic remarks at him. Like in a courtroom drama, they cry, *“I object!”* They want to twist his words with their feigned understanding, *“So what you're really saying is... the more we sin, the more glory God receives. Is that right?”* But the truth is they have no understanding of what Paul is saying at all. Paul will use **Baptism, Death, Burial, Resurrection, and New Life** to convey the practical results of the spiritual reality of what it means to be, *“In Christ.”*

### **AN “IMAGINED OBJECTOR:**

**Vs 1** *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”*

Those who lean toward a *“legalistic”* interpretation of salvation will always have trouble with the *“hypothetical implications”* of a *“grace orientation”*. This of course was a problem with the **Judaistic Believers** of Paul’s day, and with those who look for outward evidence of “real” salvation in our day. They fear that God’s *“free gift of grace”* [Paul used the words *“grace and free gift”* **8xs in ROM 5:15-17**] gives people a *“license to sin”*, or *“cheap salvation.”*

In **ROMANS 6–8** Paul defends his doctrine of *“justification by faith”* several times. He **anticipated** three major **objections**:

- (1) *“If God’s grace abounds when we sin, then let’s continue sinning so we might experience more grace”* (ROM. 6:1–14)
- (2) *“If we are no longer under the Law, then we are free to live as we please”* (ROM. 6:15–7:6)

### (3) “You have made God’s LAW sinful” (ROM. 7:7–25).

These objections prove that the readers *did not understand either Law or Grace*. They were going to extremes: **Legalism** on the one hand and **License** on the other. So as Paul **defended JUSTIFICATION**, he also **explained SANCTIFICATION**. He taught we can live lives of **Victory** (ROM 6), **Liberty** (ROM 7), and **Security** (ROM. 8). He did this by teaching the Believer’s relationship to the **Flesh, THE LAW, and The HOLY SPIRIT**.

Lest we have the impression that these “objections” are pointless and beyond reality, consider the teaching of the notorious **Russian Monk, Grigori Rasputin (1869-1916)**, the evil influencer of the **ROMANOV ROYAL FAMILY of Nicholas II** – the last Emperor of Russia.

**Rasputin** taught that “*salvation came through repeated experiences of sin and repentance.*” He argued that “*because those who sin more require more forgiveness, those who sin with abandon will, as they repent, experience the greater joy.*” THEREFORE, **it is the believer’s duty to sin.**

At times this type of thinking has been intellectualized, as in the last century in James Hogg’s *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Today this thinking is very common among those who wish to justify their sexual lifestyles.

The **CHURCH IN CORINTH** had this problem, for when Paul insisted that an incestuous couple be excommunicated, there were some who saw nothing wrong with the incest... thinking it was an excellent display of Christian liberty to **accept**, and even **celebrate** it (see **1 CORINTHIANS 5**).

## ROMANS LESSON 35 PART 2: “DEAD BUT ALIVE”

### PAUL’S PASSIONATE RESPONSE:

**Vs2** *By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

His answer was: “*By no means!*” (v. 2a) OR “*May it never be,*” NASB; “*Of course not!,*” TLB; “*God forbid,*” KJV; “*No, no!,*” NEB; “*What a ghastly thought!*” Phillips.

Paul has no use for even the slightest hint that grace encourages sin.

*These are the strongest words that could be used in the debate language of the day.* It is a TOTAL rejection of the opponents argument, while still setting the stage for an “*apology*” that proves that even the idea of such a conclusion is foolish and illogical.

In fact, he finishes **verse 2** with a question to the contrary that shows the ignorance of the one who presented the objection: “*We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*” The remainder of the chapter is a carefully constructed “proof” he will use to substantiate his position. In a manner Paul is saying, “*any thinking person would surely know this. Therefore, you have NOT thought this through AT ALL. How foolish you show yourself to be!*”

*Paul was not ALWAYS gentle...*

**Verses 3–14** are Paul’s “instructional answers” the **reasonable questions** faced by every Believer, “*How do those who are under this, ‘free gift of grace’ live our lives practically... without being characterized by a life of sin? How are we to live lives of victory?*”

Paul answers these **reasonable questions** in his customary logical manner.

**First**, by **understanding** the nature of our **identification with CHRIST** (vv. 2–10).

**Second**, by **accepting** our **identification with CHRIST** as true (v. 11).

Third, by **yielding** to the **CHRIST with whom we are so wonderfully identified** (vv. 12, 13).

## **UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF OUR IDENTITY WITH CHRIST:**

To the Apostle Paul, what every believer **“knows”** is terribly important. This is a common theme found throughout his writings, **“Do you not know...”** Paul was certain that a Christian’s godly lifestyle depended greatly upon what one **“KNEW... that the Christian life of SERVICE follows DOCTRINE.** It is only natural that his Letters were filled with his attempts to increase the knowledge of the Believer.

**COL 1:28-29 [PHILLIPS TRANS] So, naturally, we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about him, SO THAT, if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ. THIS is what I am working at all the time, with all the strength that God gives me.**

### **Knowledge is KEY...**

**ROM 5:3 Do you not know** that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

The key word in **verses 3** through **10** is “know,” which occurs three times:

**“Or don’t you know ...” (v. 3),**

**“For we know ...” (v. 6),**

and **“For we know ...” (v. 9).**

All of these revolve around the nature of our **union with Christ.** THIS is essential IF a Believer is to understand **“what God has done FOR us by the fact of OUR position IN Christ as a result of FAITH.”**

**\*\* One of the greatest presentations of this principle is the Book, “The Normal Christian Life, by Watchman Nee.” It is an invaluable addition to any Believers library. One of his introductory points is that what He presents as the “Normal Christian Life,” is actually anything BUT normal... for most Believers have never learned the principles he presents therefore they cannot “live them.”**

### **We DIED...**

**“We died to sin...”** That is the First understanding the Believer MUST come to. It could be seen that everything that follows in **ROMANS 6** elaborates on THIS point. Paul repeats the idea of our **“...having died to sin”** in every verse through **VERSE 8.**

**Vs 3— “All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.”**

**Vs 4— “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death.”**

**Vs 5— “We have been united with him like this in his death.”**

**Vs 6— “Our old self was crucified with him.”**

**Vs 7— “Anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”**

**Vs 8— “We died with Christ.”**

There are also **TWO** important, **but often not seen,** grammatical statements made: **“WE... DIED”**

- **WE...** In the Greek language the pronoun subjects of verbs are included in the verbal endings. So, it is not necessary to have a separate pronoun.

- However, when an author wants to **emphasize the subject**, the pronoun can be **explicitly added to the sentence**, *which is the case here*.
- The thrust of the statement is to contrast the **“we” who are now in Christ** with
  - (1) Others who are **not in Christ** but who are still in Adam...
  - (2) Ourselves **as we were before** God saved us...
  - It could possibly be **“interpretively stated”** as, **“BUT NOW, WE...”** so as to contrast OUR PRESENT STATE with the other two positions...

*D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “The whole emphasis is on **our uniqueness**, **our special position**, we **‘being what we are.’** That is what makes the question of verse 1 unthinkable.”*

- **DIED...** The second thing we need to keep in mind as we think through the various interpretations of this verse is **the Tense of the verb “died”**.
  - It is an **AORIST Tense**, which means that it refers to **a single action that has taken place in and been completed in the past**.
  - We will see how important this is as we proceed, since numerous people read the verse as if **“died”** were in a different tense entirely.
    - Some treat it as if it were a **PRESENT Tense**: **“we are dying to sin.”**
    - Some as a **PAST IMPERFECT Tense**: **“we have died and are continuing to die to sin.”**
    - Some as a **FUTURE Tense**: **“we shall die to sin.”**
  - But **“died”** is **none of these**: It is an **AORIST** and refers to **a finished past or completed action**.

Having reviewed this idea, we will continue in our **NEXT session** by discovering WHAT this DEATH was, HOW it occurred, and WHAT it means to us. This is expressed in **verses 4-11**.

**ROM 6:4-11** *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

<sup>5</sup> *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

<sup>6</sup> *We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.* <sup>7</sup> *For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

<sup>8</sup> *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

<sup>9</sup> *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.* <sup>10</sup> *For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.*

<sup>11</sup> *So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*