

DOES THE CHRISTIAN HAVE AN OLD MAN?

by

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Does the Christian have an old man? Many commentators would answer yes to this question. The reason for an affirmative answer is because of an inadequate interpretation of Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9, 10. They have allowed personal experience to be the criteria for interpretation instead of the context. The context of Romans 6 must be connected with Romans 5. If this connection is correctly made, the old man is seen as the whole, unregenerate man in Adam. The old man is crucified with Christ which results in a literal death. The believer is no longer in Adam; he is now in Christ.

A distinction must be drawn between the old man and the sin nature if correct doctrine is to be maintained. Paul is not talking about a nature in Romans 6, but a man. It is that man who dies resulting in the freedom of the body from sin's power. Even though the sin nature will never leave a believer, its reign of power over the members of the body has been annulled. The believer is dead to sin which means sin cannot control the believer unless the believer allows it.

Inadequate interpretation has caused men to see a battle waging between the old man and the new man. The old man has only died positionally not experientially. Therefore, victory is difficult. The correct interpretation views the old man as dead. The war is still waging but it is between the sin nature and the Spirit of God. The new nature is the channel by which the Spirit of God carries on this war. But here the victory is won because it is the Spirit waging the war not the new man.

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Adviser

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and present an answer to the question: Does the Christian have an old man? This question arose initially out of an exegetical class in Romans. The study of Romans six left this writer in a state of confusion. At the same time, this question was also being dealt with at this writer's home church, in which a group of individuals felt that a Christian did not have a sin nature. These factors led this writer to approach this subject with the desire to see what the Bible had to say about it in detail.

The question is not really new. It has arisen time after time in past history as men have sought to find the answer to the problem of recurring sin in their lives. If one believes that the old man is dead, does that mean that he has no sin nature? If the old man is alive, how does one account for the fact that the old man was crucified? Is the positional/experiential dichotomy a legitimate explanation of this problem? These are some of the basic questions that have arisen as a result of this study.

This thesis will not center around only one verse that has been exegeted. Rather, it will look at several

verses to see what they have to say regarding this problem. One of the crucial starting points in presenting this paper is defining the biblical terms with conciseness. Most of the problems that have arisen have been caused by inadequate defining of terminology. So it is the first objective of this thesis to properly define the biblical terms used in the verses dealing with this subject in Chapter II.

Once the terms are defined, the state or condition of those terms in respect to the believer and to sin will be examined in Chapter III. What is the state of the old man after crucifixion? What is the condition of the body of sin after the old man is crucified? Is it destroyed? What is the believer's condition in respect to sin? These questions will be answered in this chapter.

The next chapter will seek to summarize the previous two chapters by examining the old man/new man view and the old sin nature/new nature view. The implication of both these views will be summarized.

The last chapter will simply seek to summarize and conclude all that has been said in the preceding pages. The answer to the question of this thesis will be stated and a conclusion drawn.

## CHAPTER II

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### The Meaning of the Old Man

The correct definition of this term is essential because this thesis centers around this term and its meaning. This Greek phrase ὁ παλαιός ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος is found in Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, and Colossians 3:9. It has been explained as the carnal nature, the flesh, the unregenerate man or the old Adam. This wide variety of definitions on the part of commentators has caused many to be misled in their understanding of the term.

#### Definition of Old

There are basically two Greek words which mean old: (1) ἀρχαῖος, (2) παλαιός. The first word refers to that which has existed for a long time.<sup>1</sup> The emphasis is on the length of time it has been in existence, such as, "Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple" (Acts 21:16). The second refers to that which is antiquated, out of date, ancient, worn out.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Bauer; William F. Arndt; and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed. revised and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 610.

It is this second meaning which is used to describe the old man. The old man is seen as an individual that is antiquated, worn out, no longer around.

#### Definition of the Old Man in the Context

When one comes to Romans 6:6 where Paul uses this term for the first time, the context is most important. How would the Romans know what Paul was referring to unless he had given a meaning to the term earlier? It would seem as one goes back into Romans five that Paul explains this term. Romans 5:12 begins Paul's explanation of the human race's identity with Adam with reference to sin and death: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Paul continues to show that Jesus Christ came to be the one man that through one act of righteousness, justification of life resulted for all men (Rom 6:18). The contrast that Paul has developed between the sin of the first man, Adam, and the act of righteousness by the second man, Jesus, gives the basis for the definition of the old man in Romans six. S. L. Johnson states,

The Apostle had never met many of the members of the Roman assembly, and, in addition, he had not had the opportunity of instructing them in any great degree directly or indirectly. Thus, when the Romans came to the expression ὁ παλαιός ἄνθρωπος in 6:6, where would they look for the meaning of the term? Chapter five, with its contrast between the first man, Adam, and the second man, the Lord from heaven, would be the only

logical place for them to go. The term, then, undoubtedly is related to chapter five and finds its true significance there.<sup>1</sup>

### The Old Man as the Sin Nature

Even though many commentators recognize the relationship between chapter five and chapter six in defining the old man, they fail to draw the right conclusion. Some would see the old man simply as the sinful nature. Godet says, "The expression 'our old man' denotes human nature such as it has been made by the sin of him whom originally it was wholly concentrated, i.e., fallen Adam reappearing in every human ego that comes into the world, i.e., this corrupt nature."<sup>2</sup>

There are several problems when the old man is limited just to the human nature. First, Christ's death on the cross was to redeem the whole man, not just the nature.<sup>3</sup> The whole man was placed under judgment. Paul states in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The whole man was involved in the

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<sup>1</sup>S. L. Johnson, "A Survey of Biblical Psychology in the Epistle to the Romans" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1949), p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, trans. A. Cusin, ed. Talbot W. Chambers (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1883), p. 244.

<sup>3</sup>For a detailed definition of this term see pp. 22-31 below.

redemption process, not just our nature. The whole man is in view in Galatians 2:20, where Paul states, "I have been crucified with Christ. . . ."

Secondly, the context of chapter six logically leads one to believe Paul is talking about a man, not just a nature: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin . . ." (Rom 6:1); "How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom 6:2); "Therefore we have been buried with Him . . ." (Rom 6:4); "For if we have become united with Him . . ." (Rom 6:5). Upon reading verse six, one must see the old man as more than a nature; he is the whole man which was crucified.

Thirdly, if Paul was referring to the old nature why did he not use φύσις instead of ἄνθρωπος?<sup>1</sup> The word φύσις means human nature or disposition.<sup>2</sup> Paul used the word which would communicate to the Romans that he was speaking of the whole man. Also, the use of ἄνθρωπος ties Romans six with Romans five, where this term is used frequently to describe the first man, Adam, and the second man, Jesus.

#### The Old Man as Whole, Unregenerate Man

Other commentators view the old man as more than just the corrupt nature inherited from Adam. Lenski writes, "Our old man is more than a personification, for it denotes

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, "Romans," p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 869.

our entire being as it existed before regeneration."<sup>1</sup> If we are to look at the context, Paul is talking about what we were in Adam before regeneration. Murray defines the old man as: "The whole unregenerate man, conceived of as a member of the first federal man, Adam."<sup>2</sup> In light of the above reasons why the old man cannot be limited to the human nature, it seems that Paul is referring ethically to the whole, unregenerate man in Romans 6:6.

This Greek phrase ὁ παλαιός ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος is also found in Colossians 3:9. In this text Paul is talking about the manner of living of the Colossians. He is exhorting them to put aside the former manner of life: anger, wrath, malice, slander, etc. The reason for this exhortation is that the old man is already dead. They are now new men and should be living accordingly. Kent says, "The reason why such practices could no longer be indulged is that these believers had already put off 'the old man with his deeds.' At the time of their regeneration this had been done."<sup>3</sup> Paul is not talking about a nature living in this manner, but a man. Natures do not lie, get angry, slander, etc.; men do these things. Paul is referring to patterns of

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 401.

<sup>2</sup>John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 219.

<sup>3</sup>Homer A. Kent, Jr., Treasurers of Wisdom, Studies in Colossians and Philemon (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1978), p. 117.

lifestyle that are characteristic of the old man. Therefore, this passage also confirms that the old man is more than a nature; he is ethically a whole, unregenerate man.

The last passage this phrase is found in is Ephesians 4:22. This passage also is referring to the former pattern of living of the old man. Paul seems to indicate that it is a whole, unregenerate man and his former lifestyle that is to be laid aside, not just an old sinful nature. Paul is consistent in the use of this term in Ephesians and Colossians which gives added strength to the interpretation of Romans 6:6. The importance of this interpretation of the old man will be seen clearer as other terms are defined in this thesis.

#### Summary

In summary, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, and Colossians 3:9 all show that Paul views the old man ethically as the whole, unregenerate man present in all individuals as a result of the fall of man.

#### The Meaning of Flesh

The identification of this term is most important for the believer today. Much is said in the New Testament concerning the flesh as it relates to man. Its identification will be looked at in terms of the New Testament.

#### New Testament Usage of Σάρξ

Arndt and Gingrich list σάρξ usage in a number of ways in the New Testament. First, it is the material that

covers the bones of a human or animal body. Jesus commented in Luke 24:39, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Second, it is the body itself, viewed as substance. Paul in reference to husbands loving their wives in Ephesians 5:29 says, "for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it." Third, it is a man of flesh and blood. This is referred to by Paul in Romans 3:20, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight. . . ." Fourth, it is human or mortal nature, earthly descent. Paul uses this idea of flesh in Romans 4:1, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our father according to the flesh, has found?" Fifth, it may refer to the corporeality, physical limitations, life here on earth. Christ was limited to a fleshly body while here on earth: Colossians 1:22, "Yet He has not reconciled you in His fleshly body through death." Sixth, it may be the external or outward side of life, as it appears to the eye of an unregenerate person, that which is natural or earthly. This is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:26, "For consider your call, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh. . . ." Seventh, in Paul's thought, the flesh is the willing instrument of sin, and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present and no good thing can live in the  $\sigma\acute{o}\rho\chi$ .<sup>1</sup> Paul uses this sense of the word extensively in

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<sup>1</sup>Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 750-51.

Romans. Consider also Romans 7:19, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."

It is this last meaning that is to be considered in more depth. Thayer defines σάρξ:

When either expressly or tacitly opposite to the Spirit it has an ethical sense and denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God. Paul uses "flesh" of the whole person, body and soul, reason and all his faculties included, because all that is in him longs and strives after the flesh.<sup>1</sup>

The ethical sense of flesh can be seen in Romans 7:5, "For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." The weakness of the flesh is brought out by Paul in Romans 6:19 where he says, "I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. . . ."

#### Summary of usage of σάρξ

Four basic points can be drawn from the varied texts on this word. First, the usage of flesh focuses on man's creatureliness and frailty or that he is fragile, fallible, and vulnerable.<sup>2</sup> Thus "all flesh is grass, and its glory is

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<sup>1</sup>C. L. W. Grimm, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, trans. Joseph H. Thayer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1976), p. 571.

<sup>2</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "Flesh," by Colin Brown, 1:678.

like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, the flower fades" (Isa 40:6-8; cf. 1 Pet 1:24).

Second, flesh merely refers to the physical part of man, but does not evaluate him as a man.<sup>1</sup> "Infirmity of the flesh" (Gal 4:13) is physical illness. Christ became man; "The word became flesh" (John 1:14). Also, Peter shows that Christ suffered "in the flesh" (1 Pet 4:1).

Third, flesh means "to assess a truth or a phenomenon 'in accordance with the flesh' is to reach a verdict on the basis of purely human, external, or natural considerations."<sup>2</sup> Jesus warns the Pharisees that they will misunderstand him because they will judge his testimony in purely human terms alone (John 8:15). Paul warns believers not to judge Jesus Christ or other Christians on appearance or purely human terms (2 Cor 5:16).

Fourth, flesh evaluates man as a sinner before God.<sup>3</sup> The flesh is always out to fulfill its needs and desires first, without any regard to others. Romans eight points out rather clearly that the flesh is hostile to God and cannot be obedient to the law. The result of a fleshly life is death (Rom 9:13; Gal 6:8).

#### Flesh is Not Inherently Evil

The conclusion that is sometimes drawn from this discussion is that flesh must be inherently evil. There is a connection between sin and flesh because Paul writes:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 679.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 680.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

For you were called to freedom brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. . . . But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. . . . Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality . . . (Gal 5:13, 16, 19).

The question must then be asked: Does sin flow out of the evilness found in the flesh? There are those who would say that Paul would answer, yes, because of the result of the influence of Greek dualism on his mind.<sup>1</sup> This cannot be true if one looks at the writings of Paul closely. Stevens presents six arguments that show Paul is opposed to the philosophy of Greek dualism. First, Paul makes a clear distinction between sin and flesh. Sin may reside in the flesh and make it the sphere of its operations, but sin is never equated with the flesh. Paul never says that the flesh is inherently sinful. Second, in Romans 7:7, Paul is not talking about where sin came from, but only the relationship it has to the flesh. Third, when Paul talks about the origin of sin in Romans 5:12, he does not say that it came with the flesh. Sin came as an act of the will on the part of Adam. In Romans 8:3-9, Paul is contrasting the flesh against the Spirit in an ethical sense. The flesh here is seen as the ethical principle, which is opposed to God. The seat of this ethical principle, is found in the mind. The contrast is not between two substances, one being inherently evil and the inherently holy. Fourth, the position of Paul

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<sup>1</sup>George B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1925), p. 339, lists several who support this view.

stated in Romans 5:12 is the same as the Jewish view of Adam's original sinlessness. When Adam was created in flesh, he was sinless. Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good." Fifth, Paul's view of flesh is that it can be cleansed: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1). The body can also be used as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13). The body is to be made a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1). How then can the body be evil? It cannot. Sixth, Jesus Christ came down to live in a body of flesh.<sup>1</sup> Christ was sinless so how could His body be inherently evil? It could not be. Christ possessed a body of flesh but not a sinful flesh as men today. From these arguments it should be clear that the flesh is not inherently evil. The flesh is the instrument of sin. The flesh is the dwelling place of sin, but not the origin of sin. Weiss would agree with the above arguments when he says, "Paul neither thought of the material substance of the body as being evil in itself, nor of sensuality as the principle of all sin."<sup>2</sup>

#### Nonethical and Ethical Usage of Flesh

The point of this discussion shows that the Bible speaks of generally two usages of the word σάρξ. The first

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 339-40.

<sup>2</sup>Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885), p. 339.

is the nonethical which relates to the body we live in. It is a body of flesh and blood. The second usage is the ethical sense which refers to the disposition in man that is opposed to God. It is through this disposition that sin wages its war against the Spirit.

#### Derivatives of Σάρξ

##### σάρκινος

It is also important to consider σάρξ in its different forms. The doctrine of carnality is connected to two derivatives of σάρξ. The first word is σάρκιμος. This word occurs three or four times in the NT. When a word ends with the ινος suffix, it means "'the substance of which anything is made.' Examples of this would be: θύιμος, of thyine wood (Rev 18:12), ὕαλιμος, of glass, glassen (Rev 4:6)."<sup>1</sup> This is also seen in 2 Corinthians 3:3, where Paul says the Corinthians are a "letter of Christ . . . written . . . not on tablet of stone, but on tablets of human hearts" (i.e. hearts of flesh). The word is used in Romans 7:14, "but I am of flesh." Paul is stating that he is made of flesh and blood, but also that he is weak in a spiritual sense unable to stop sinning. This term is again used in 1 Corinthians 3:1, where Paul is speaking to the Corinthians "not as spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ." Paul makes two points: (1) They are babes in Christ,

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London and Cambridge: MacMillan and Company, 1865), p. 260.

immature believers, (2) they are not spiritual. In other words, they were not living their daily lives under the control of the Spirit. They were living as if they were still without Christ.

σαρκικός

The second derivative of σάρξ is σαρκικός. It is found seven times in the New Testament (Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:11; 1 Cor 3:3a, b; 2 Cor 1:12, 10:14; 1 Pet 2:11). In Romans 15:27 and 1 Corinthians 9:11, it is used to mean "belong to the order of earthly things, material (i.e. a non-moral, non-ethical usage)." "In the other five references it means belong to the realm of the flesh insofar as it is weak, sinful, and transitory (i.e. moral, ethical sense)."<sup>1</sup> Trench says, "'Fleshly' lusts are lusts which move and stir in the ethical domain of the flesh, which have in that rebellious region of man's corrupt and fallen nature their source and spring."<sup>2</sup> Peter uses this moral, ethical aspect of σαρκικός in 1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul." It is these lusts that arise out of the ethical disposition of the flesh. The lusts have taken over the area that the spirit ought to have reigning power.

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<sup>1</sup> Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 750.

<sup>2</sup> Trench, Synonyms, p. 261.

The distinction between σαρκικός and σάρκινος

What is the distinction then between σαρκικός and σάρκινος? Lenski makes a helpful comment about this distinction in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 3:1-3:

The difference between the two terms is: "fleshy," and you cannot help it (I Cor. 3:1); "fleshly," and you can but do not help it (I Cor. 3:1). "Fleshy," you carry a bad load but will soon be rid of most of it (3:1); "fleshly," you follow a bad norm and refuse to get rid of it (3:3).<sup>1</sup>

The believers as addressed in 1 Corinthians 3:1 still have some of the fleshy characteristics of their unregenerate lives. Paul does not approve of this, but understands that it takes time to grow to maturity. These believers still live in the flesh and participate in its condition. Sin is always a part of their lives because they have been "sold under sin." Christ has set them "free from sin" but as long as they live on earth, they will live under the condition of sin. But then Paul changes his tone in 1 Corinthians 3:3. There is no excuse for being fleshly. They are actively involved in sin. The jealousy and strife that they are causing is evidence of their willing participation in fleshly sin.

Summary

Romano summarizes his discussion on σάρξ:

As the root of carnality sarks binds the believer to the realm of weakness, impotence, and ultimate sinfulness, it does so by means of binding the believer to self, to

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 124.

self-focus, self-reasoning, self-seeking, self-doing, self-achieving. In serving self, the Christian thus becomes a slave to self--self is unfulfilled and sin is made complete.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, σάρξ has seen to communicate three basic ideas: (1) Man is made of flesh and blood; (2) Man is frail and weak physically; (3) Man is frail and weak spiritually. The ethical idea stems from the last usage of σάρξ, where it is viewed as the sinful, unregenerate part in which the old man lives and is active. It is also where the fleshly Christian temporarily places his priorities. Σάρξ may also be referred to as the disposition which wages war against the believer and God.

#### The Meaning of Body of Sin

This phrase has been defined by many individuals in a number of ways. The phrase σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας is important because it is said to be done away with or made powerless in Romans 6:6. A similar phrase used in Romans 7:24 is σῶμα τοῦ θανάτου.

#### Unregenerate Nature View

The first view of this phrase σωματης ἁμαρτίας is held by F. F. Bruce. He believes that the body of sin is the "flesh, the unregenerate nature with its downward tendency, the 'Old Adam' in which sin is found a ready

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry Romano, "Old Man, New Man and Flesh: Their Meanings and Relations" (Th.M. dissertation, Talbot Theological Seminary, 1979), pp. 39-40.

accomplice."<sup>1</sup> This body of sin does not refer to the individual as such, but to the whole body of Christ who have shared in the sin and death of Adam. It is not the human body spoken of here that is to be destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

There are a few problems with this view. First, the use of σῶμα here by Paul does not mean flesh in the fleshly way. Paul is referring to the physical body. Gundry comments on this point, "It is the body which sin, or the flesh, dominates, as in Romans 9:12-13."<sup>3</sup> Secondly, it has already been shown that the old man is the Adamic nature described in Romans 5:12-21. The old man cannot be equated with the body of sin. Proof for this distinction between these two terms will be shown later.

#### Old Man View

The second view held by a number of men is the idea that equates the old man with the body of sin. This view is held by Hodge, Shedd, Augustine, Luther, Plummer, Barnes. They would see that Paul is just repeating himself to make greater emphasis. Hodge states, "the body of sin is only another name for the old man or rather for its concrete form. The design of our crucifixion with Christ is the destruction of the old man, or the body of sin. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F. F. Bruce, The Epistles of Paul to the Romans. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>3</sup>Robert H. Gundry, Sōma in Biblical Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on Romans (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1972), p. 197.

Shedd believes that they represent the same concept because the doing away with the body of sin is a result of the crucifixion of the old man. Also, he believes σῶμα is subsequently used for σάρξ or corrupt nature as seen in Romans 8:12, "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

There are several problems with this view. Paul is again using σῶμα here as the human body, not in a figurative sense. The body of sin is not being personified. This interpretation does not go along with the use of σῶμα in verses 12, 13 of Romans six. Paul is talking about a literal body that can be used for righteousness or unrighteousness. Godet adds that, "The purpose of this moral execution, included in the very fact of faith, is the destruction of the body of sin. There ought to be a complete difference between this second fact indicated as the aim and the foregoing one."<sup>2</sup> From these arguments it would seem that this view is incorrect.

#### Mass or Totality of Sin View

The third view that has been taken by Calvin, Philippi, Haldane, Stuart, and many others is that the body of sin represents the mass or totality of sin in an individual. Calvin's comments, "The body of sin, which he mentions a little later, does not mean flesh and bones, but the

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<sup>1</sup>William G. T. Shedd, A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Godet, Romans, p. 245.

whole mass of sin, for man, when left to his own nature, is a mass of sin."<sup>1</sup> Body is not taken in a literal sense but in a figurative sense. Stuart remarks that "Sin is personified and represented as a monster with a body."<sup>2</sup> This view stems from the fact that Paul is not talking about a real old man, so how can he be talking about a real body of sin?

Paul is talking ethically about a literal old man that was put to death. Therefore, the body of sin must also be taken in a literal sense. The context speaks of a literal body which is referred to in Romans 6:12, 13. There is no personification of the body of sin. Paul is describing a body characterized by sin.

#### Instrument of Sin View

The last view representing this phrase, body of sin, is where it is seen as the instrument of sin. Men who hold this view are Godet, Moule, McClain, Martin Lloyd-Jones and others. This phrase, body of sin, is called the genitive of possession. It means that the physical body is possessed by the sinful nature or that it dominates or controls the body.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians, trans. Ross MacKenzie, in vol. 8 of Calvin's Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, 12 vols. (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Moses Stuart, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: H. Griffin and Company, 1835), p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, Treasures from the Greek New Testament for the English Reader (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942), p. 91.

This view goes along with the context of the passage. It takes "body" as the sphere in which sin and death still reign. It sets the stage for further explanation of the body seen in verses 12, 13, 19, etc. Lenski says,

Here we have Paul's view of the body as the organ by which the sin in us operates and works itself out. The sin is by no means only in the body, it is in our entire being and enslaves that being utterly and to its complete destruction. Man, however, consists of soul and body, an immaterial and a material part, and thus the body with all its members is the great instrument through which the soul operates. "The body of the sin" is the body used by the evil power of sin which has enslaved the entire being and thus works itself out through the body and its members.<sup>1</sup>

This idea of the body being an instrument is seen throughout the New Testament. It is seen as the instrument of suffering. Galatians 6:17, "From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus." Again in Philippians 1:20, "Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." It can be the instrument of a holy life; Romans 12:1, "Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice . . ."; 1 Corinthians 6:20, "Therefore glorify God in your body." It is also through the body that our deeds will be judged; 2 Corinthians 5:10, "That each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body." Romans 7:24 speaks of the body of death, "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" The body can be an instrument of unrighteousness as seen in Romans 6:6 or it can be an instrument of righteousness as Romans 6:13.

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<sup>1</sup>Lenski, Romans, p. 402.

The phrase "that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Rom 6:6) also gives a basis for this view. The analogy of slavery is presented here because a slave is under control of its master. The old man was crucified so that the body might not be controlled by sin any more. Vincent comments on this point, "Sin is conceived as the master to whom the body as slave belongs and is obedient to execute its will. . . . So the earthly σῶμα belongs not of itself to the ἀμαρτία but may just as well belong to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:13)."<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

Gundry summarizes what has been said,

Τό σῶμα τῆς ἀμαρτίας, therefore does not refer to an abstract mass of sin, to the system of sinful desires, to sin personified as a sphere of power in the Old Aeon, or to the sinful personality, but concretely to the physical body, which has been dominated by sin, is doomed to destruction, and will receive resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Meaning of Nature

One term that seems to be used today in describing man is the word φύσις. It has been said that man has an old and a new nature. In order to understand what these terms mean, the word φύσις must be defined.

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 3, The Epistles of Paul (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Gundry, Sōma, p. 58.

### Meanings from Language

The Webster's Third International Dictionary defines nature in relation to man as: (1) "the fundamental character, disposition or temperament of a living being usually innate and unchangeable." (2) a creative and controlling agent, force or principle operating in something and determining wholly or chiefly its constitution, development, and well-being.<sup>1</sup>

The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary gives φύσις the meaning of: "the inherent character of a person or thing (Rom 1:26; 2:14; 11:21-24; 1 Cor 11:14; Gal 4:8), by birth (Rom 2:27; Gal 2:15; Eph 2:3), disposition (2 Pet 1:4)."<sup>2</sup>

According to Arndt and Gingrich, this word when applied to man means: (1) natural endowment or condition. Galatians 2:15, "We are Jews by nature . . ."; Romans 2:27, "And will not he who is physically uncircumcised" (uncircumcised by nature); Ephesians 2:4 describes men as "children of wrath"; Romans 11:21 talks about the "natural branches"; Romans 11:24c speaks of a "tree which by nature is a wild olive"; 11:24b, "and were grafted contrary to nature. . . ." (2) Natural characteristics or disposition: 2 Peter 1:4 speaks about men "becoming partakers of the divine nature"; Galatians 4:18, "You were slaves to those which by nature

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, s.v. "Nature," by P. B. Gove, pp. 1507-08.

<sup>2</sup>Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Nature," by Merrill C. Tenney, p. 573.

are no gods." (3) Natural being, product of nature, creature, and species and mankind:<sup>1</sup> James 3:7a, "For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race (nature)."

Thayer defines φύσις in regard to man as "the sum of innate properties and powers by which one person differs from others, distinctive native peculiarities, natural characteristics: James 3:7; 2 Peter 1:4."<sup>2</sup>

φύσις is expressed in similar terms by Moulton and Milligan as: (1) "birth," "physical origin," Galatians 2:15; Romans 2:27. (2) "innate properties or powers" which belong to persons or things in view of their origin, as in 2 Peter 1:4.<sup>3</sup>

### Summary

In summary one could conclude from these sources that a human nature is: the inherent, fundamental character, disposition or temperament of man which operates within the individual affecting their development and actions.

### Meanings from Theologians

Some theologians have commented on this term, but many use the term without defining it at all. Berkhof

<sup>1</sup>Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 869-70.

<sup>2</sup>Thayer, Lexicon, p. 661.

<sup>3</sup>J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 679.

defines nature "as the sum total of all the essential qualities of a thing, that which makes it what it is." He goes on to say, "A nature is a substance possessed in common, with all the essential qualities of such a substance."<sup>1</sup>

Strong would say that a nature is "that which is born in a man, that which he has by birth." He also seems to indicate in his discussion on the corrupt nature of man that it is a substance or inborn faculties.<sup>2</sup>

Shedd defines nature as he talks about the nature and person of Christ. "When we speak of a human nature, a real substance having physical, rational, moral, and spiritual properties is meant. This human nature, or substance, is capable of becoming a human person, but as yet is not one."<sup>3</sup>

Buswell also defines the word nature as he deals with the person of Christ. He says that a nature is a complex of attributes and not a substantive entity. He even comments on Charles Hodge's definition of nature.

The great systematic theologian, Charles Hodge, sometimes failed to recognize the distinction between a nature and a substantive entity. He says, "the union of soul and body in the constitution of man is the analogue of the union of the divine and human natures

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<sup>1</sup>L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), pp. 577-78.

<sup>3</sup>William G. T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 289.

in the person of Christ." This is a mistake. Soul and body are substantive entities, while a nature is a complex of attributes.<sup>1</sup>

This author must agree with the definition given by Buswell. He does not cloud the understanding of this term by using the word substance. In fact, he says that the human nature is not a substance. This author must then conclude that a nature is a complex of attributes in a broader sense as shown by Buswell, Berkhof and Strong. The idea of human nature also carried the meaning of inborn faculties.

### Summary

It can be summarized then that a human nature is the inherent, fundamental character, disposition or temperament of man which operates within the individual affecting his development and actions. This definition will be most helpful in understanding some basic principles of the nature or natures of man.

## Old Nature

### Biblical view of the change in man's nature

The first question that must be answered is, "What is the old nature?" To answer this question, it is important to first look at the Biblical view of man's nature. The original state of man's human nature can only be seen through the Biblical account of creation. God created the

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<sup>1</sup>James O. Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), pp. 54-55.

heavens and the earth and all that went with it and said, "it was very good" (Gen 1:31). God created man in His own image according to His likeness (Gen 1:26). Strong comments that this making of man in "the image of God" means: (1) Natural likeness to God, or personality. Man was distinguished from the animal. He could now choose right from wrong. He could know himself, the world and God. He was made valuable in the eyes of God so much so that God was willing to send His own Son to die in order that man might continue to have fellowship with God. (2) Moral likeness to God, or holiness. Man reflected the moral attributes of God.<sup>1</sup> Man was created righteous. Solomon records in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright. . . ." Paul remarks about the new man in Ephesians 4:24 and says, "and put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." And again in Colossians 3:10, Paul says, "and have put on the new man who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." These verses point out the fact that man's human nature at creation was one consisting of the righteousness of God because that state is what God is renewing in man.

Man was given a will to choose to follow the laws of God. Genesis 2:16, 17 records the first command given to man to follow, "From any tree of the garden you may eat

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<sup>1</sup>Strong, Theology, p. 514.

freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in that day that you eat from it you shall surely die." In spite of all that God had given Adam and Eve, they chose to sin against God (Gen 3:1-24). This voluntary act of the will on the part of man transformed Adam into a servant of sin. At this point the nature of man changed from one of righteousness to one of unrighteousness. Berkhof comments on this point: "As a result of the fall, the father of the race could only pass on a depraved human nature to his offspring."<sup>1</sup> Paul remarks to the Ephesians "that we too . . . were by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). Also, in Romans 5:12, Paul talks about our relationship with Adam and his transgression: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." This depraved human nature or sinful nature is transmitted to all mankind when they are born. This sinful nature is the same thing as the old nature.

It must be kept in mind that the drastic change that took place in Adam involved the moral likeness to God or holiness and not the natural likeness to God or personality. If it had involved the latter, man would have no longer existed. The change was an ethical change and not a metaphysical change. Van Til makes this comment concerning the change in man:

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<sup>1</sup>Berkhof, Theology, p. 221.

We know that sin is an attempt on the part of man to cut himself loose from God. But this breaking loose from God could, in the nature of the case, not be metaphysical; if it were, man himself would be destroyed and God's purpose with man would be frustrated. Sin is therefore a breaking loose from God ethically and not metaphysically. Sin is the creature's enmity and rebellion<sup>1</sup> against God but is not an escape from creaturehood.

The point of this is to show that man did not change or become a different person after he sinned. His human nature changed ethically from righteousness to unrighteousness but he remained the same man.

#### The place of the old nature in man

The question also may be asked, "Where does the old nature or old sinful nature live?" It was shown previously that the old man in Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:22 cannot be the old sin nature. If the old sin nature cannot be the old man it must be something else. In the discussion on the word σάρξ, it was seen that this word has an ethical sense. It can mean the earthly nature of man apart from divine influences, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God. The flesh works out this opposition to God through the members of the body. Paul referred to this in Romans 6:12, 13, "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body . . . and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness."

It was also pointed out in the definition of body of sin (Rom 6:6) that sin is master over the body. The body is

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<sup>1</sup>Cornelius Van Til, The Defense of the Faith (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972), p. 46.

used as the instrument of sin to achieve its end results of unrighteousness.

From these discussions it can be said that the old sin nature is the same as the flesh and is associated with the body. The body serves as the instrument through which the deeds of the old sin nature are carried out. Paul speaks to this point in Romans 7:17, "but sin which indwells me"; (vs. 18) "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh"; (vs. 20) "but sin which dwells in me"; (vs. 21) "I find then the principle of evil is present in me"; (vs. 23) "but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members." Paul does not say that the body is evil, just that the law of sin or the old sin nature is in the members of the body. Lloyd-Jones has this to say about the relationship of the old sin nature to the body,

I myself am dead to sin as a realm and reign, I have finished with it, it has nothing to do with me. But though that is its relationship to me, it still has a good deal to do with my body. I myself am already in Christ, "seated in the heavenly places" with Him. . . . That is what is true about me. But though that is the truth about me, it is not yet the truth about my body, my mortal body. Sin is still in my mortal body, in my members. . . . Sin remains in its influence upon the body. I myself as a being, a spiritual being, am entirely and eternally outside the realm of sin's influence but it has pleased God in His eternal wisdom to leave sin in the body.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 6, The New Man (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 73-74.

### Summary

The basis of Romans seven is that Paul wants to be free from the slavery of sin over his body. The result of the death of the old man in Romans six was to nullify sin's influence over the body. This is why Paul ends Romans seven in this way, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin." Even though the old sin nature is associated with the body, the body is set free from the slavery of the old sin nature.

### New Nature

The Bible would indicate that when a person becomes a believer, he gains a new nature. It is appropriate to examine what the new nature is in light of the whole discussion of man's natures. If consistency is to be maintained in this paper, one cannot say that the new nature is the same as the new man. It was shown before that the old man was not the same as the old nature. This distinction between the old man and the old nature must be carried to a distinction between the new man and the new nature. Showers has also drawn this distinction, and gives further evidence for its support. First, Colossians 3:9, 10 shows that the new man is constantly being renewed. The new man is in a state of growth. The new nature is not in a state of growth. It

is an expression of the moral nature of God. Since God's moral nature never changes, the new nature never changes. Therefore, it cannot experience renewal and cannot be the same thing as the new man. Second, Colossians 3:9, 10 shows that man is the recipient of knowledge. This knowledge is the source of the renewing that is taking place. Since the new nature does not experience renewal, then it cannot be the recipient of knowledge. The fact that the new man is the recipient of knowledge and the new nature is not, shows that these are not one in the same.<sup>1</sup> If the new nature is not the new man, then what is it? Certainly, it is safe to say that the new nature is the totality of attributes that shape the new man.

#### Definition of new nature

The definition given to nature earlier was: The inherent fundamental character, disposition or temperament of man which operates within the individual affecting his development and actions. It must be said then that the new nature is a new character, disposition or temperament given to man by the Holy Spirit upon regeneration which operates within the individual affecting the development of the new man and his actions.

#### Divine nature

There is only one reference which uses a term similar to the new nature and that is 2 Peter 1:4, "in order that

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<sup>1</sup>Renald E. Showers, "The New Nature" (Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 226-27.

by them you might become partakers of the divine nature. . . ." This Greek word θεῖος was used by the Greeks to denote "the divine nature, power, providence, in the general, without reference to any individual deity."<sup>1</sup> Calvin says that the "Manicheans used to dream that we took our roots from the stem of God and that when we have finished the course of our life we shall revert to our original state."<sup>2</sup> This is not what Peter is saying in this verse. Peter is using the language of the Hellenistic people, but is giving it the correct meaning. Lenski comments on the use of the divine nature, "Ours is the restored divine image, righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24) plus knowledge (Col. 3:10). When they are restored in us they do not deify us; yet they are derived from God and make us κοινωνοί of divine nature."<sup>3</sup>

What seems to take place is that the person upon believing in Jesus Christ is once again restored to fellowship with God. This fellowship is possible because the believer has received the moral likeness of God that he had before the Fall. This moral likeness is the righteousness

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<sup>1</sup>Thayer, Lexicon, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>Jean Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter, trans. William B. Johnston, in vol. 12 of Calvin's Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, 12 vols. (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 330.

<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1956), p. 262.

and holiness of God. This restored moral likeness would be the new nature of man.

Peter is saying the same thing here as John is saying in John 1:12, those that receive Jesus Christ have become children of God. Paul has much to say in this area: Galatians 2:20, "Christ lives in me"; Romans 8:9, "indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." John Owen summarizes adequately what has been said in 2 Peter 1:4,

The new creature therefore does not consist in a new course of actions, but in renewed faculties, with new dispositions, power and ability to perform them. Hence it is called "the divine nature," 2 Peter 1:4. This divine nature is not the nature of God . . . yet a nature it is; a principle of operation; and that divine or spiritual; an habitual holy principle, wrought in us by God and bearing his image.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

In summary, regenerate man receives a "new nature" or a "new disposition" which operates within the individual affecting development of the "new man" and his actions.

### New Man

It will be helpful for a better understanding of the discussion at hand to look at what is meant by the new man. This term is used in Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10. The idea of a new creation is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15. Paul relates to the Ephesians the need to put on the new man, and to the Colossians Paul remarks that they

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<sup>1</sup>John Owen, The Holy Spirit (Evansville, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1960), pp. 129-30.

have put on the new man. There are several ideas that stand out in these two verses: (1) The new man is according to God or in the likeness of God. (2) He was created by God. (3) He has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (4) He is being renewed to a true knowledge. (5) The renewing will bring him in accordance with the image of God. Chafer writes concerning the new man: "The new man is that which is wrought by the regenerating power of the Spirit--'a new creature. . . .'"<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that a change has taken place in the regenerate man. He is ethically no longer the old man. He is a new man in all areas of his life. His spirit has been renewed. Romans 8:10 says, "And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness." Since the spirit of man has been renewed, it can now bear witness with the Spirit of God as Romans 8:16 relates, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

A new ability to think has also been given to the believer. He now has the ability to receive God's truth and understand it. This fact is brought out by Paul who writes in 1 Corinthians 2:16, "But we have the mind of Christ." The truth that has been revealed to believers can be taken and put into practice in their lives because they understand it. Romans 12:2 shows the work of God on the

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<sup>1</sup>L. S. Chafer, The Ephesian Letter (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Company, 1959), p. 140.

believer's mind, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . ." Even though the believer has the ability to know the mind of Christ, there still needs to be adjustment of the moral and spiritual vision and thinking to the mind of Christ. The believer's mind must be made new from above.

Paul also writes to Timothy that God has given believers a sound mind in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and sound judgment." The believer now has the ability to know God and fellowship with Him. And it is through that new ability to think that the believer chooses to serve God. "So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God . . ." (Rom 7:25).

The believer has also been given the new ability to love God and others. First John 4:19 says, "We love, because He first loved us." The believer's ability to love is possible because of the changes that took place when he was regenerated. Paul also comments that, "hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

The commands given to the believer by Christ indicate that the believer has the ability to do them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the believer must have the ability to obey Christ. Paul says in Romans 6:16, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom

you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness." The believer is no longer a slave to sin and therefore is free to obey Christ. The believer's body has been freed from the bondage of sin and death (Rom 7:24, 25) and can now serve God in righteousness. It has also been shown that the believer has been given a new nature which desires to please God (2 Pet 1:4). All these evidences point to the fact that a change has taken place in the regenerate man and he is indeed a new man.

#### New Creature

What can be said about Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:17? "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Arndt and Gingrich describe the new creature "as the state of being in the new faith by the same words as a new creation in Galatians 6:15."<sup>1</sup> Foerster makes the comment in his discussion of the new creature:

All God's work of creation is by His Word and Spirit, but this new creature has its existence in the Spirit; the new life is now "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Man's existence is new in virtue of the new relation to God. . . . The decisive thing in the new creature, then, is not an alternation in man's moral conduct but the acceptance (in faith) of a new relation to God. This new relation is bound up with Christ. . . .<sup>2</sup>

What is being said here is that when man puts his trust in Christ, the Spirit of God comes into man and renews his

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<sup>1</sup>Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 455.

<sup>2</sup>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "κτίσις," by Werner Foerster, 3:1034.

spirit. Man is not the same creature ethically that he was before. God has completely changed him into a creature that wills to have fellowship with his Creator. The old things have passed away, like the old man and all his tendencies which were in opposition to God. The new things have come, like the new desire to fellowship with other men and with God in love. The new creature is the same thing as the new man.

#### Summary

In summary, the new man is seen as the new creature in Christ. His spirit has been renewed by the Spirit of God. He is created in righteousness and holiness. He now has the new desire to respond to God out of love and obedience.

#### Summary

The purpose of this first chapter was to define the Biblical terms relating to the overall question of this thesis. The summary of those definitions will be given as follows:

(1) Ethically speaking, the old man is the whole, unregenerate man identified with Adam in Romans 5:12-21. This whole, unregenerate man is passed on to all men because all men have come from Adam.

(2) The term flesh can be said to basically represent three ideas: (a) Man is made of flesh and blood; (b) Man is frail and weak physically; (c) Man is frail and weak

spiritually. This last ethical idea represents the sin nature and its continual opposition to God.

(3) The phrase, body of sin, was found to mean the body used by sin as an instrument to work out its evil deeds. The body of sin was not the same thing as the old man.

(4) Nature was defined as it relates to man. It is the inherent, fundamental character, disposition or temperament of man which operates within the individual affecting his development and actions. The old nature was seen as the unrighteous character or disposition of man transmitted through Adam. The old nature was identified as something different than the old man. The old nature was seen to be associated with the flesh. The new nature was defined as the new character, disposition or temperament given to man by the Holy Spirit upon regeneration which operates within the individual affecting the development of the new man and his actions. The new nature was distinguished from the new man, but seen as a part of the new man. The new man or new creature was identified as the regenerate man who was completely changed ethically by the renewing of his spirit by the Spirit of God. The old man has died and the new man now lives.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN TO SIN

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship that exists between the Christian and sin. Many of the important terms that relate to this area were defined in Chapter II. In order to look at this relationship closely, the condition of those terms in respect to the believer and to Christ must be examined. The first condition is found in Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20; 5:24, which is the crucifixion of the old man. The second condition is also found in Romans 6:6 in which the body of sin is said to be done away with or made powerless. The third condition centers around the idea that the believer is dead to sin. This concept is found in several verses: Romans 6:2, 7, 11.

#### Crucifixion of the Old Man

The basis of the crucifixion of the old man is that it was done when Christ was crucified. The Greek verb  $\sigma\upsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{\omicron}\omega$  means to be crucified along with another person or persons.<sup>1</sup> Few believers would deny that Christ's crucifixion was a literal crucifixion in history. The Gospels record the Lord's crucifixion in much detail (Matt 27; Mark

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<sup>1</sup>Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 795.

15; Luke 23; John 19). The result of the crucifixion was death. Jesus was prepared for burial and laid in a tomb (Matt 27:59-60). It is interesting to note in the Romans six passage that Paul does not equate the crucifixion of Christ with the crucifixion of the old man, but the death of Christ with the crucifixion of the old man. It is the death of Christ that is central in the understanding of the crucifixion of the old man.

#### Crucifixion--A Gradual Process of Death

There are those individuals who fail to see the principle just stated. As a result, they want to see the crucifixion of the old man as a gradual process. Godet makes this comment,

This old man has been crucified so far as the believer is concerned in the very person of Christ crucified. The Apostle does not say that he has been killed. He may still exist, but like one crucified, whose activity is paralyzed--not an immediate death certainly, but the reduction of it to powerless.<sup>1</sup>

Another individual remarks, "It is not implied that the old man no longer exists. . . . The old fallen nature lingers on in the believer."<sup>2</sup> The difficulty with this commentator is that he has failed to distinguish between the old man and the old sin nature. Tholuck expresses his view on this quite thoroughly,

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<sup>1</sup> Godet, Romans, pp. 244-45.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans. Vol. 1. ICC. Edited by J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 309.

Crucifixion, first painfully robs a man of all his power of action. He still lives, but lives under constraint and torture. By slow degrees does he sink away, until the breaking of his limbs puts an end to him at last. In like manner might it be said, is the love of sin pierced through by the impressions which the Holy Spirit makes upon the heart.<sup>1</sup>

#### Crucifixion Represents the Actuality of Death

The difficulty that these and other men like them fall into is that they have failed to view the context of the passage. The thrust of Paul's message is that Christ died. That death enabled Him to be resurrected to a new life. The result of crucifixion was death and the result of the believer's crucifixion with Christ was death to the old man. Calvin says, "I do not agree with those interpreters who explain that Paul used the word crucified rather than dead because our old man is still alive, and in some measure flourishing."<sup>2</sup> Paul is building a case for the believer's identification with Christ in baptism and death. That is why he says the old man was crucified with Christ to emphasize that identification. This identification is also emphasized in Galatians 2:20.

The tense of the verbs used would also indicate that Paul was talking about an action that was completed. The Galatians 2:20 passage says, "I have been crucified with Christ. . . ." The Greek verb συνεσταύρωμαι is in the perfect

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<sup>1</sup>F. A. G. Tholuck, Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, trans. Robert Menzies (Philadelphia: Sovin and Ball, 1844), p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>Calvin, Romans, p. 125.

tense indicating a completed past action. The passive verbs of Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20 also show that the action was done by Christ, not by man.

The reference continually used by Paul in Romans 6:2, 7, 11 to "died to sin" would indicate that he is not talking about a continual dying to sin, but an action that is completed. Paul wants the Romans to understand that the old man has been crucified or put to death and they no longer are alive to sin.

#### Judicial death

Many will say that "it is true that the old man has been crucified and is dead, but that is judicially and not actually. Experientially, all believers know that sin continues to wage a war against God." This writer believes that this concept has risen because of an inadequate interpretation of the old man. They fail to understand that the Bible does not equate the old man with the old sin nature. Therefore, they say that the old man is crucified judicially and not actually.

#### Summary

This writer contends that the old man was crucified judicially at Christ's death because this writer was not alive at that time. God has judicially or legally declared that when a man becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, his old man is literally, actually dead. That individual is a new man, or a new creation in Christ. Sin still exists because

it is associated with the flesh but it does not reign as it did before becoming a believer in Jesus Christ.

### Body of Sin Made Powerless

#### Paul's Usage of this Term

The Greek word καταργηθῆ means to abolish, wipe out or set aside.<sup>1</sup> It is used in 1 Corinthians 13:11 when the child becomes a man, he "did away with childish things." Paul also uses the word describing the events of Christ's coming, "when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24). This word is also used when speaking about Christ's relationship to death in 2 Timothy 1:10. "By the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death." In Romans 7:2, Paul uses this verb to describe the release of the woman from the law when her husband dies. It is used also in Romans 7:6, to describe the release of the believers from the law.

#### Summary

Paul's usage of the verb καταργέω from the context of his writings means: to make powerless, ineffective, set aside, release. Lenski makes this comment, "It is made too strong when it (καταργεω) is rendered: to destroy, to annihilate. Once for all it was put out of commission or effect. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Looking at Romans 6:6, the statement "that our body of sin might be done away with . . ." means that the body of

<sup>1</sup>Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup>Lenski, Romans, p. 402.

sin is made powerless, ineffective. Sin no longer has power over the body to use it as it wants. The body has been released from the power of sin, just as the wife is released from the law when her husband dies. It cannot mean to destroy or annihilate, because Paul never used καταργέω in that sense. Also, since Paul is talking about the literal body, if the body is destroyed, nothing is left. Martin Lloyd-Jones summarizes the use of this verb, "that this hold of sin upon us, even in the body, might be rendered null and void and ineffective."<sup>1</sup>

#### Dead to Sin

##### Usage of Term

The Greek phrase ἀπεθόμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ is found in Romans 6:2. This verse relates that believers have died to sin, therefore they should not continue to live in it. This concept of the death of the believer to sin is also seen in Romans 6:7, "for he who has died is freed from sin." The Greek phrase νεκρούς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ is found in Romans 6:11. Both of these Greek phrases convey the same thought. The believer is dead to sin. There is little difference in the meaning of the two Greek words, ἀποθήσκω and νεκρός. They both mean destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative. Therefore, one would say that sin has no power or force over the believer. It has been made inactive or inoperative.

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd-Jones, Romans: Chapter 6, p. 76.

### Meaning of Term

The question might be asked, "In what sense has sin been made powerless or inactive?" Sin is still present in the life of the believer. The answer to this question can be found in the context of the Romans five and six passages. Romans five introduces the reign of sin and death in man through the sin of Adam. Every man born since Adam (except Christ) was born with an old, unregenerate man where sin reigned. The result of that sin was death. There is also found in chapter five the contrasting reign of grace through the righteousness of Christ. Every man who believes in Jesus Christ has been freed from the condemnation of sin and death (Rom 5:17). Sin no longer can reign in the lives of regenerate men.

Romans six then draws upon this contrast in chapter five to show the state of the believer. The believer is said to be dead to sin. This means that he is dead to the reigning power of sin. The old man has been put to death, and therefore sin has no place in which to reign any longer. The reigning source of power for sin was destroyed when the old unregenerate man died.

This is why Paul says in Romans 6:11, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." The believer is dead to the reigning power of sin and he needs to know that fact and believe it as true. The problem the believer faces is that he still sins and so he wonders how can this fact of Romans 6:11 be true.

The believer must realize that sin is still very much a part of himself. It will be until death or rapture, but it does not have to have control in the life of the believer. The believer's identification with Christ has freed him from the reign of sin in his life.

Notice the position of the believer as found in other passages. Colossians 1:13, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son." Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven." Ephesians 2:19, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." A believer cannot allow sin to gain control when this is his position in Christ.

#### Summary

The two purposes found in the crucifixion of the old man in Romans 6:6 are: (1) that sin will not have reigning power over the body. The body does not any longer have to be the instrument of sin; (2) that sin will not enslave the believer any longer. The slavery of sin is broken. The believer is freed from the reign of sin in his life.

#### Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on explaining the condition of the old man as being crucified; the body of sin as being made powerless and the believer as being dead to sin. The purpose in defining the condition of these terms was to

give a better understanding of the relationships between the believer and sin.

The crucifixion of the old man was seen to result in a literal death of the old man. The old man does not linger on, dying slowly each day. The death is final, just as Christ's death was final. This takes the believer out of Adam and places him in Christ. The fact is judicially true, but also actually true for the believer.

The body of sin was shown to be made powerless or ineffective. The control of sin over the body was released. Sin can no longer use the body as an instrument of unrighteousness unless the believer allows it to be done.

The condition dead to sin means the reign of sin and death over the believer has been stopped. The believer is positioned with Christ and is not with Adam any longer. Sin cannot reign in the life of the believer because he has died to it. The slavery of sin has been broken for the believer.

It is important that the believer understand completely his relationship to sin. Then he can better understand that he has been co-crucified, co-buried, co-resurrected with Christ. This may be positional truth, but it must also become actual truth. The believer must understand these things and then relate them to his everyday life, seeking to make them actual in his experience.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEW MAN/OLD MAN VIEW VERSUS THE SIN PRINCIPLE/NEW NATURE VIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the old man/new man view and the sin principle/new nature view. These views have been explained briefly throughout this thesis, but now they will be looked at more completely. The problem that has arisen is that a view is presented to people which does not take into consideration the whole of Scripture. Therefore it remains inadequate and confusing to those desiring to understand the Word of God. So it is the desire of this writer to explain these views adequately so that others might see the implications involved with each view.

#### Old Man/New Man View

##### Basis of this View

This view is probably the most common among believers today. It is held by many well-known theologians: John F. Walvoord, Charles Hodge, John Calvin, Robert Haldane, Albert Barnes, J. Dwight Pentecost and others. This view sees the believer as having a bad man and a good man living within him. There is a constant struggle as to which man will be in control. The believer decides who will control by whether he

chooses to rely upon the help of the Holy Spirit or not. When the believer decides to live the Christian life by his own power, the bad man will control and sin will result. If the believer chooses to rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit, the good man will be in control and righteousness will result.

The basis of this view stems from the interpretation of Romans 6:1-13, Colossians 3:9, 10 and Ephesians 4:20-24. The old man is viewed as the sin nature, body of sin, flesh and the unregenerate man from Adam. There is very little distinction drawn between the meaning of these terms.

Walvoord makes this comment:

The Scriptures reveal that every child of Adam possesses Adam's nature, with all its pre-disposition to sin. Whether designed as the sin nature (Rom. 5:21; I John 1:8), the Adamic nature, the flesh (Rom. 13:14; I Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 7:1; 10:2-3; Gal. 5:16-24; 6:8; Eph. 2:3, etc.); the old man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9-10), or any other term, the reference is to the human nature, including soul, spirit, and body.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of distinction drawn between these terms has led to problems in interpretation of vital passages. The old man as spoken of in Romans 6:6, Colossians 3:9, 10 and Ephesians 4:24 is not dead. The crucifixion that took place only rendered the old man inoperative or powerless. He still exists in the life of the believer but he has no power or control over the believer. The Ephesians 4:22 passage seems to reinforce this view because it says, "that, in reference

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Holy Spirit (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1954), p. 207.

to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." If the old man were dead, why would Paul exhort the Ephesians to put him aside? The old man must be alive. Also, another point that substantiates this idea is experience. From experience, the believer knows that he still sins, therefore the old man must be alive. To say the old man is dead is to say there is no sin nature, which means man does not sin. This is certainly not Biblical in light of 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

In order to explain the concept of crucifixion, these men have called this positional truth. Positionally the old man was crucified and put to death. But experientially, believers know that the old man is still alive. This explanation would fit well with Ephesians 4:22. Paul is simply exhorting the Ephesians to put off the old man experientially.

The old man is dead positionally but alive experientially. It is in constant opposition to the new man. The new man is the new nature, the new disposition, and the new creature which the believer has become in Christ. The new man wants to please God in everything he does. He has a new heart, a new mind, and a new will. The new man is not seen as positional truth but as reality. The new man is an actual part of the believer.

The result of having a new man and an old man in the same person is a constant battle for control. Pentecost confirms the presence of this constant battle.

Because of the impartation of a new capacity to the will, the child of God is in constant conflict. There is an unrelenting, ceaseless warfare going on within him all the time. This warfare is described for us very clearly in Galatians 5:17 where the apostle says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so<sup>1</sup> that ye cannot [or, may not] do the things that ye would."

Victory for the new man is accomplished through the yielding of the believer to the power of the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit the believer will be controlled by the old man.

#### Difficulties of this View

There are several difficulties associated with this view that will be discussed. (1) The old man in Romans 6:6 is not spoken of as a nature, but as a man. (2) The meaning of the old man must come from the context. The context reveals that the old man is ethically the whole, unregenerate man given to all men because all men come from Adam. (3) Crucifixion of the old man is not positional truth, but an actual truth. When a person becomes a believer, the old man in him actually dies. This does not mean there is no sin nature. Sin is still very much a part of the believer. (4) The context of Ephesians 4:22 shows that Paul is talking about habit patterns which still exist in the life of the believer. It is not the old man as the individual that Paul is exhorting to put off; that already happened at conversion. (5) This view leaves believers confused as to their real

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<sup>1</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Designed to be Like Him (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), p. 79.

position in Christ. They cannot grasp the positional/experiential concept centered around the doctrine of the Bible.

### Sin Principle/New Nature View

#### Basis of this View

This view is held by such men as John Murray, Martin Lloyd-Jones, S. L. Johnson, R. C. H. Lenski, W. H. Griffith Thomas and others. The primary thrust of this view says that the old man is dead, but there remains a sin nature or principle within the believer. The sin nature is opposed to the new nature received by the believer at conversion. This view may seem very similar to the old man/new man view but there are some real differences.

The old man in Romans 6:6 has been crucified and is dead. The old man is not the sin nature, the body of sin, or the flesh. The distinction was drawn between the meaning of these terms earlier in this thesis. The old man is ethically the whole unregenerate man. Martin Lloyd-Jones comments on this idea, "The 'old man' is the man I used to be in Adam. That has been the context since chapter five verse 12. I was a man in Adam; I am now a man in Christ. It is the man I once was, but which I am no longer. It is not my carnal, sinful nature."<sup>1</sup> The old man represents what an individual was in Adam. The believer is no longer in Adam but in Christ, so the old man is gone. It is not possible to be in Adam and

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd-Jones, Romans: Chapter 6, pp. 62-63.

be in Christ at the same time. A person must be in one or the other.

Some would question the death of the old man on the basis of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians. But the context of Ephesians 4:22 indicates that Paul is not talking about the old man as an individual, but the habit patterns left by the old man. The passage also is speaking in terms of result. It refers to what has already happened to the old man.<sup>1</sup> This Ephesians 4:22 passage does not conflict with Colossians 3:9, 10 or Romans 6:6 but reinforces the death of the old man.

Even though the old man is dead, there still remains a sin nature or sin principle. This sin nature is associated with the flesh. Paul refers to this association between the flesh and the sin nature constantly in Romans 7, (vs. 17) "but sin which indwells me"; (vs. 18) "nothing good dwells in me"; (vs. 20) "but sin which dwells in me"; (vs. 21) "I find then the principle that evil is present in me"; (vs. 23) "law of sin which is in my members." It is the sin nature that is constantly in conflict with the new nature. Paul desires to do those things which are good, but finds he ends up doing what is wrong (Rom 7:14-23).

The new nature is that new disposition or new desire given to the believer at conversion that operates within, controlling his development and his actions. This new nature

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<sup>1</sup>John Murray, Principles of Conduct (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 215.

has no power of its own to please God. It is only a channel through which the Holy Spirit works.

#### Implications of this View

The implications of this view are several. (1) It gives a correct interpretation of the identity of the old man. (2) It does away with the positional/experiential truth concept at this point which is difficult to understand. (3) It gives the believer a clearer picture of his position in Christ. (4) It allows the believer to see that the power of sin has been broken. (5) Victory for the believer is certain because it is the Spirit who is waging the war against the sin nature, not the believer himself.

#### Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the old man/new man view and the sin principle/new nature view. It was shown that the sin principle/new nature view was closer to the correct interpretation of Scripture. The positional/experiential truth concept can be done away with at this point because it only seems to cloud the real understanding of the passages. A better understanding of his position in Christ ought to enable the believer to gain the victory that was intended for him at the cross.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to answer the question: "Does the Christian have an old man?" In order to answer this question several other related ideas had to be examined. These ideas were centered around the body of sin, the sin nature and the new nature.

Chapter II focused on defining the biblical terms that related to the question of this thesis. It was shown that the old man had to be ethically speaking, the whole, unregenerate man in Adam. The context of Romans five and six gave the major support for this interpretation. The next term that was defined was the word flesh. This word had a number of meanings depending upon its usage. Flesh could be summarized to mean one of three things in the Bible: (1) Man is made of flesh and blood. (2) Man is frail and weak physically. (3) Man is frail and weak spiritually. It was this last ethical idea that Paul uses to describe the sinful nature of the believer which wages war against the new nature. Body of sin was defined next. It was found to be the literal body of a believer used by sin. Sin can work through the members of the body using them as the instruments of unrighteousness. The last term to be defined was the word "nature."

The sin nature became a part of all men at the fall of man. Man's human nature changed ethically from one of righteousness to one of unrighteousness. Nature was also defined with respect to the new nature given to man at conversion. It was seen as the new character, disposition or temperament given to man by the Holy Spirit upon regeneration which operates within the individual affecting the development of the new man and his actions. A distinction was drawn between the old man and the sin nature. The flesh was considered to be the same as the sin nature and body of sin but distinct from the old man.

Chapter III dealt with the condition of those terms defined in Chapter II. The old man is literally dead in the believer because he was crucified with Christ. There is no need to explain this crucifixion as positional truth. It is actual truth, because it actually happens to every individual at conversion. The result of this death of the old man made sin's control over the body powerless. Sin no longer has power in the life of the believer, except what the believer allows. The last condition was the believer's death to sin. The believer is taken out of the reign of sin and placed in the reign of grace. Sin cannot reign over the believer anymore.

Chapter IV looked at the two views: (1) the old man/new man view, (2) the sin nature/new nature view. The old man/new man was the conflict between the bad man and the good man. It did not see any distinction between the old

man and the sin nature or flesh or body of sin. The old man was crucified positionally, but alive experientially. Several points were summarized that showed the inadequacy of this view. The sin nature/new nature view saw a distinction between the old man and the sin nature, body of sin and flesh. The old man was taken as literally dead in the believer. The sin nature's struggle was not against the new nature but against the Spirit of God. This insured victory for the Christian.

#### Conclusion

The answer to the primary question of this thesis is No. The context of Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9 indicate that the old man literally dies in an individual at the point of conversion. Crucifixion is an actual happening resulting in death and is not simply a positional truth. The old man is not the same thing as the sin nature, body of sin or flesh. Therefore, when the old man dies the power of sin is broken. Man is transferred from a reign of sin and death to a reign of life and peace. The death of the old man does not mean the believer has lost the sin principle or nature. The sin nature is associated with the flesh of man and as long as the individual is alive in the flesh, the sin nature is present.

The victory comes to the believer when he first realizes his position in Christ. He is no longer in sin's reign, but in the reign of grace and righteousness. Secondly,

victory is inevitable because it is the Spirit that is waging the war with the sin nature, not the believer. The believer must act upon these truths each moment as he is confronted with temptation daily.

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