

“Beauty and the Beast”
A Study in the Book of Romans
August 19, 2026
Romans VI

“Ding dong, the witch is dead, the wicked old witch is dead”:
Solving the problem of living the Christian life

1. What water baptism symbolizes (vs 1-11)

- A. In verses 1 and 2**, the apostle Paul anticipates an objection to the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone - that grace would lead people to willfully sin, thinking that the more they sinned, the more grace would abound to cancel out their sin and any negative consequences. Paul responds with a rhetorical question: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”* This question refers back to **Rom. 5:20**: *“Moreover, the law entered, that the offense (sin, a domain of power, and control) might abound. But where sin abounded, grace (a domain of power and control) did much more abound.”* He continues to emphatically denounce this potential error, writing, *“God forbid!”* (certainly not!). The words translated as “God forbid” are **“me genoito”** in Greek, and they literally mean “let it not be”. Herein, Paul shows such a conclusion is utterly foolish and impossible to even consider for those who are truly saved from sin by grace alone through faith alone.
- B. In verses 3-7**, Paul shows that the outward sign of water baptism illustrates the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit and what it accomplished in and through us. He explains that in the same way Christ was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead, so the “old man” (**who we were in Adam**) was crucified and buried with Christ, and the new man (**who we now are in Christ**) arose with Christ. He further teaches that because the old man has been crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed (rendered ineffective, powerless, and stripped of its former dominance and control because it is dead), we now have the victory **over sin in Christ**, who died once for sin and is alive forever more, thus freeing us from sin forever. (**1 Cor. 15:22, 34-58; 2 Cor. 5:17**). To grasp this truth, study the different natures of the first Adam and the last Adam. In the first Adam, we could and did sin; in the last Adam we cannot sin. This is objective truth initially appropriated by faith, not by experience. The experience of the truth comes later as expressed in **Rom. 12-23; Eph. 2:8-10; and 1 John 3:1-11**.
- C. In verses 8-11**, Paul doubles down on the truth that the old man who was crucified with Christ is dead; not symbolically dead but rather “most sincerely dead.” He writes, *“Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead **indeed** (which is **men** in the Greek and means verily, truly) unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The word translated “reckon” is **logizomai** (the same word we see in **Rom. 4:9**), an accounting term, and in **verse 11** it means “to consider and calculate”. Paul

amplifies the significance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and its profound impact on the lives of those who believe, which cannot be overstated. The word translated as “dead” here is **nekros** in Greek. This word regards the death of the human body, as in **James 2:26**, and it also means the actual spiritual condition of unsaved men, as in **Eph. 2:1-10**. However, here it is used to speak of the ideal spiritual condition of believers in regard to sin, as in **Col. 3:1-17**. The key to embracing and walking in this profound truth is to stay focused, by faith, on the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and our intimate and vital relationship with him in the same. (**Eph. 5:25-33**). Such a focus will result in a personal testimony like Paul’s in **Gal. 2:20-26; 6:12-18**.

2. Freedom from the reign of sin and the power to live holy (vs 12-14)

A. In verses 12-14, Paul points to the practical application of this brilliant, God-given theology for everyday life. He implores believers, in light of this liberating truth, to *“let not sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust thereof.”* The first Adam lived in a perfect, sinless environment, enjoying a perfect relationship with God, and yet he sinned. When he sinned, death entered by sin, so in Adam all die. Sin reigned without remedy until the last Adam conquered sin, hell, and the grave. Therefore, in Christ we have the victory over sin and do not have to practice sinning (go on living in sin). Presently, we are growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and as we walk by faith in this revelation, ***“sin shall not have dominion over us.”***

3. We are servants of a new master because of the gift of God. (vs 15-23)

A. In verses 15-23, Paul shows that where we were once sinners by nature and sinners by choice, we have now been made righteous by nature in Christ and empowered to be righteous by choice. One must exercise their free will and choose to yield their entire physical body to righteousness. It is as if Paul is telling us not to waste this tremendous gift of God’s amazing grace by failing to walk in the newness of life in Christ and living as if you were still in bondage to sin, who you were in Adam. To borrow a line from The Wizard of Oz, “Ding dong, the witch is dead, the wicked ole witch is dead!” ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 12:1-3)***