

New Man, New Heart
We Have Only One Nature

by Rene Brown

The bible teaches very plainly that when we repent of our sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved and given eternal life. But something else very important happens as well. Our “old nature” or “old man” or “old self” was placed in Christ and died when he died. That is, we were crucified with Christ.

Rom 6:6-8 (RSV) “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

Gal 2:20 (RSV) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Col 3:3 (RSV) “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Now these scriptures plainly teach that our old self was crucified with Christ. The purpose of crucifixion is twofold: 1) to make a person suffer and 2) to kill him. It is plainly a manner of killing someone. Anyone who has been crucified is dead.

So something of us was crucified when Jesus was crucified. Something of us is now dead! How is this possible? He was crucified 2,000 years ago, and we live now. Here is the straightforward, simple answer: It happened in the eternal, heavenly realm - that same realm where you are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Eph 2:6 (RSV) "and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," That is correct: The same God who is able to make you sit with Christ in heavenly places is able to crucify you with Christ.

Difficult to understand: Certainly!!! Impossible with God: Not at all!!! He is God; He can do as He pleases. Nothing is impossible with God. We need to come to believe that above all else! So often we read scripture through our earth-bound, practical, glasses. If we cannot see how it is true in the natural we just relegate it to some heavenly thing of no immediate benefit to us. But this death that Paul proclaims over and over in scripture makes possible a second truth to come to pass: We are raised a **NEW MAN!**

In Romans 6:8 above it says, “we believe that we shall also live with him”. If this scripture stood alone, we might assume that it is speaking of someday in heaven. Yet, other scriptures make it plain that we will live with Him in this life. For example, Galatians 2:20 “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” So His life has brought life to us in this earthly life, not just in heaven someday. Jesus is **Life!**

The following scriptures abundantly testify to the fact that we are a new creation, a new creature, a **NEW MAN** in Christ.

2Cor 5:17 (NNAS) "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Col 3:9-10 (RSV) "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices ¹⁰and have **put on the new nature**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Gal 6:15 (NNAS) "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but **a new creation**."

Eph 2:15 (NNAS) "by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into **one new man**, thus establishing peace,"

Eph 4:22-24 (RSV) "**Put off your old nature** which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts,²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and **put on the new nature**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

So we not only see that the old man (the old nature, the Adamic nature, which was that which caused us to sin as a matter of who we were) has been crucified with Christ and died, but we have also been created anew - we are a **new man** in Christ, created with a **divine nature** according to 2Peter 1:4 (RSV) "by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and **become partakers of the divine nature**." John speaks of this new man in 1 John 3:9 (RSV) "No one born of God commits sin; for **God's nature abides in him**, and he **cannot sin** because he is born of God."

Theologians have been wrestling with that scripture since it was written. What to do with a scripture speaking of the NEW MAN who is born of God and saying God's nature abides in him and then saying that **he cannot sin!!!** The only ones of us not sinning so far as we see with our eyes are dead and buried in the ground. Everyone still in this body appear to be sinning regularly and many are sinning very frequently. Perhaps you see yourself in the category of someone who sins regularly. What is the answer?

Many have explained 1 John 3:9 as speaking of what our habit is; that is, it is not our custom or habit to sin though we do sin. But though that is a sop to our conscience it does not accord with what the facts: In this realm, in this life, most of us sin regularly if not frequently. Yet, scripture says plainly, "**...he cannot sin**."

In order to understand the bible, particularly the writer of John's epistles and Paul the apostle, understand this: they both have a habit of jumping back and forth in their teaching between the **eternal realm** where God dwells (and our new, alive spirit) and this **temporal realm** where we dwell in body. If we put this together with the many scriptures where Paul is speaking of our holiness and righteousness and completeness in Him, we see it is another scripture that is perfectly true in the eternal realm. Our spirit dwells and is with God's spirit. They are joined as it were. Where the Holy Spirit dwells with our spirit, there is no sin. It seems impossible for God's Spirit to dwell with a spirit that is less than holy and righteous. And indeed, Paul says that is exactly what we are. That is our identity - not our identity someday but our identity today, right now. If we look past this temporal, earthly realm to the eternal realm where God dwells, we can see this is entirely possible and answers many difficult questions. Plainly we do sin in this realm where our body dwells.

As we now see that we are a NEW MAN in Christ, we can begin to act like the person we really are. We can believe that our spirit has partaken of the divine nature just as Peter says. We are not sinners! We are saints just like Paul says over and over and over. We really are **NEW!!!**

If we are saints and if our spirit does not sin and if we are willing to allow our spirit to control our life, through Christ Jesus living out His life through us, we do not have to sin in any realm. When Mr. Sin (see Romans chapter 7 for the persona that Paul describes as "sin that dwells in me") comes to entice us to sin, we can reject his overtures. We do not have to walk in the flesh since we walk in the spirit. We no longer have to sin. The NEW MAN who is created after the likeness of Christ Jesus and given the chance to rule over our lives can begin to live in Christ Jesus so that we do not sin. Yes, we may fail but we immediately repent and go on with our life. We do not wring our hands and worry and moan, but we know that we walk in the continuous forgiveness of Christ Jesus through His blood shed on Calvary.

Paul shows us that in his “inmost self” - his born again spirit in Christ - he does not want to sin. But this persona which dwells in him is doing it. (Rom 7:20 RSV) "Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me." (Rom 7:22-23 RSV) "**For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self,** ²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

Down deep inside of Paul, in his spirit, he deeply desires to do what is right, he delights in the law of God. It is in “his members” or his body that sin is possible. So this agrees with what we see in 1 John 3:9 above. In Paul’s spirit, he does not sin. Gal 5:24-25 (RSV) "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

Enjoy being a **NEW MAN** who is alive to Christ and dead to sin, dead to the law, dead to the evil one and who thrills at following Jesus in newness of Life. Jesus is our Life. He lives in us, as us, and we have willingly turned our life over to Him.

*******End of Lesson*******