

Alive To God, Dead To Sin

Introduction. The Bible is one of the most popular and yet misunderstood books in the world. It is possible to know a lot about the Bible without really understanding the Bible and how it all fits together. God could have written the Bible so that only Greek scholars or theologians could have understood it. Instead it was written so that it could be understood by seekers who have the heart of a little child.

The Bible is composed of 66 books which took 1,500 years to write. There were 40 different authors in six major empire spread over three continents. On top of all this, it was written in three different languages. Yet it has one theme: God's plan of salvation.

We live in a world where it seems that everything we thought we knew is turned upside down: morals, ethics, religion, marriage, gender, right and wrong, and good and evil. We are constantly told, "There is no absolute truth." Everything is relative, and each of us have a right to our "own truth." However, in life we know many subjects, either by observation, experience, intuition, or just plain common sense. Then there is information we know by revelation. In his letter to the Romans, Paul tells us that the gospel stands between man and salvation (Romans 1:16). It is the power of God unto salvation – not a fuzzy feeling, but a clear message of salvation. It is objective truth. How one responds to the gospel is a critical turning point in each person's life. And it must not just be believed, but obeyed (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Our sins cannot and will not be forgiven unless we have died with Christ, we have been united with Christ in His death, we have been crucified with Christ, and we have died to sin. The fundamental question of the gospel is when does all this happen? Romans 6 answers this question in a beautiful way.

I. Jesus Was Raised From The Dead

- A. The Bible affirms the resurrection of our Lord. Witnesses saw him. The sadness of the disciples was turned to gladness (Luke 24:50-53). Doubting Thomas became believing Thomas (John 20:24-29). The resurrection was at the heart of the gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:13-14).
- B. Critics could not deny it. The tomb was empty. The apostles staked their lives on this fact. And were willing to suffer and die for the resurrected Savior whose story they preached with feeling and fervor (Acts 13:29-30; 17:31; 24:14-15).

II. I Am Dead To Sin

- A. How? Because when baptized, I was immersed into a new relationship with Christ. I was buried into His death (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). I am not baptized into His literal death, but into the benefits of His death, including freedom from sin. Further light on Paul's doctrine of baptism is provided in 1 Corinthians 10:2, where all the Israelites who left Egypt are said to have been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Baptism thus seals the believer's exodus, his deliverance from the bondage of sin, and his entry into a new life of freedom.
- B. The word "freed" means "to justify, to declare to be in the right." The idea is to be declared acquitted from sin. As a man that is dead is acquitted and released from bondage among men, so a man that has died to sin is acquitted from the guilt of

sin and released from its bondage. Those who have died with Christ have the slate wiped clean, and are ready to begin their new life with Christ freed from the involvements of the past. We are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. "Reign" means to exercise the highest influence or control.

- C. As He died, I died to sin. And I was "washed in His blood" (Revelation 1:5; cp. Isaiah 53:5-6, 8, 10-11). I know that, and that gives assurance.

III. I Am Alive With Christ

- A. Christ died, but was raised. I died to sin, but was raised in newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christ is alive. I am alive, for the words of Christ "are spirit and are life" (John 6:63), so therefore I must obey the words of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Peter 4:2).
- B. Hebrews 11 teaches me that Abel offered (v. 4), Noah prepared (v. 7), Abraham obeyed, lived, and offered (vv. 8-9, 17). Sarah conceived (v. 11). Isaac blessed (v. 20). The Israelites passed through and encircled (vv. 29-30). Genuine faith requires belief-based action.
- C. This produces "everlasting" or "eternal" life (vv. 22-23). I enjoy life in all its fullness because of Jesus (Romans 5:17; 2 Corinthians 4:15; 9:8). I know that, and that supplies joy.

IV. I Am Not Satan's Slave

- A. He does not own me. I do not have to listen to him. He can only harm me if I give him permission. His power is limited because of the power of Christ (1 John 4:4).
- B. Verse 19 mentions yielding members as "slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness" (ESV). Captivity is a common theme in the New Testament (Romans 7:23; 2 Timothy 2:26; 2 Peter 2:19). But we are not forced to be servants of sin, nor does God force us to be servants of righteousness.
- C. The fruit you get from breaking Satan's grip leads to sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Hebrews 12:14). Thanks be to God, I am free (John 8:32; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:31; 5:1; James 1:25). I know that, and that provides peace.

V. Death Has No Dominion Over Me

- A. Since I am not sin's slave, death does not control me. It has no power over me. This means it does not frighten me (Hebrews 2:15). Although I must be careful because Satan seeks to devour me (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10), I am not manipulated by Satan or his followers.
- B. Death holds no dominion over the Christian because of the certainty of the resurrection for Christians (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). I know Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), and that offers hope.

Conclusion. Do not be discouraged or dissuaded by the deception of the devil and his disciples. We can know truth. It is unchanging, unbending, and unalterable. When the eyes of our understanding are enlightened by the Bible, there is so much that we can know. I know God loves me. I know that Jesus died for me. I know that I am Heaven bound! That is why I know I have assurance, joy, peace, and hope.