

## **Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 7, Romans 5 :12-6:23**

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 7, Romans 5:12-6:23.

So far, Paul has established that all people are sinners, which probably isn't too controversial a point, but he's also established that based on scripture, that salvation is to be by grace through faith.

He's also established that at this point needs to be faith in Christ through whom God has reconciled people to himself. We simply need to accept God's gift in that way. Well, in chapter five, verse 12, through chapter eight and verse 39, we're going to learn about life in Christ and the spirit.

1:17 through 5:11, righteousness by dependence on Christ's work. 5:12 through 8:39, new life involved being identified with Christ, 5:12 through 6:11, and the spirit's indwelling, 8:1 through 39. He also is going to show in this section that mere knowledge about God's righteousness or mere knowledge about God's righteous law does not produce righteousness.

In chapter one, the Gentiles who didn't know God's law were lost. In chapter seven, even knowledge of the law doesn't make us right with God unless we're transformed by union with God in Christ produces true righteousness. There are debates on the position of 5:12 through 5:21. Does it go in the former section or the later section? Does Romans 5 go in the section on justification, 1:16 through 4:25 or does Romans 5 go in the section about life, 6:1 through 8:39? 5:1, I believe, applies principles from 4:1 through 25.

He's talked about justification by faith, what we learned from Abraham. He's still explaining that in 5:1 through 11. I believe that in 5:12 through 21, there's a shift from Abraham to Adam and that the new life in chapter six is opposed to the old person who we were in Adam, Romans 6.6, that this flows from 5:12 through 21, this contrast with Adam.

Thus, I divide it this way. 5:1 through 11 goes with 1.16 through 5:11. 5:12 through 21 goes with 5:12 through 8:39. But Paul being a good person who makes arguments in a good way, Paul naturally will also transition from one point to another. So wherever exactly you divide things, it's not going to make a huge difference.

Although people have given some arguments for why it goes with a certain section rather than another one, recurrence of certain terms, and so on. 5:12 through 21.

Well, for those who wanted to insist that they were right with God because they were descended from Abraham, something that Paul had to address in chapter four, Paul points out that, well, you're also descended from Adam.

All of us are sinners, 5:12 through 21. Behavior of choices is more at issue here, I think, than genetics that identifies one's solidarity. It's not just a matter of being descended from Abraham.

You have to believe like Abraham. And with regard to Adam, well, we've sinned like Adam. With regard to Christ, we need to be baptized into Christ, chapter six and verse three.

So, you're born into Adam, but you also sin like Adam, but you are baptized into Christ. There's a contrast. Death entered the world through sin, 5:12. Christ brings life in 5:15 through 21, especially verses 18 and 19.

There's a never completed just as, *hospere* in Greek in 5:12, but that suggests the planned contrast, and he is going to have a contrast between them. There's a big debate about the grammar and the last clause of 5:12. Augustine said that Adam's descendants sinned in him and his guilt was passed on to them. That's dependent on the Latin translation.

Augustine didn't know Greek. Some people today don't know Greek, but Augustine didn't know Greek. He was dependent on the Latin translation, and this was in his later years.

He contrasted with the interpretation that we have of Greek fathers like Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodoret. So, the idea that this is a matter of sin and guilt that's passed on from parent to child is actually probably not the point, even though Augustine thought it was. Most scholars think that what it's saying is that death pervaded humanity because all sinned.

That's how it's translated, for example, in the NASB, the NRSV, the TNIV, and so on. The connection with God has been broken. Hence, all start life alienated from God and thus quite susceptible to sin.

You have probably a similar idea in Jewish documents from not too long after this, 4th Ezra, 2nd Baruch. Adam introduced sin and death into the world, but each of Adam's descendants, each of us has replicated his sin. So, it's not a matter of inheriting his sin and his guilt, but we are born alienated from God because humanity has been alienated from God, and we sin also.

5.13 and 14, we have a digression about the law. He speaks of the law's condemning function, its righteous standard, 5.13. You have the same idea of its condemning

function in 4:15 and 5:20. It prepares for the law's link with death in 7, 9 through 11. Nevertheless, sin and death were clearly around before the law, 5:14. I mean, it's clear earlier in the Old Testament, and it's certainly clear today from archeological remains and paleontology and everything else.

Death has been around for a long time. Sin brings death. The law simply allows it to be reckoned or calculated, 5:13. The Mosaic law is more explicit.

It's more demanding than natural law because it gives us a fuller revelation, 2:12 through 15. Well, 5:14, some didn't sin like Adam. Those without the law, without an explicit commandment from God, didn't sin like Adam, but it doesn't mean they didn't sin.

Perhaps we could think the same way with regard to infants. They haven't necessarily sinned. They don't have a commandment to judge it against.

But death was introduced when sin was introduced. And so, death is in the world, even for infants and others. Adam versus Christ verses 15 through 20, where we're going to have a really strong rhetorical antithesis.

Jewish tradition about Adam. Adam was the first formed model for humanity. He was full of glory before his fall.

Again, that's why some people think of 3:23, humanity sinned. All of us have sinned and certainly lost the glory of God. Adam was thought to be a person of great glory and his shining splendor filled everything around him.

The rabbis, these are later rabbis, went on to say that he was enormous, filling the earth. So it wasn't that he had to be fruitful and multiply and have all these children, but Adam, the origin of all these people, actually was as big as all people. But that's a later tradition, probably not already in Paul's day.

But Adam lost his glory and restoration would have to come through another Adam. 1 Corinthians 15:22 and 45 to 49. When Paul thinks of a new Adam or a reversal of Adam, does he have any Old Testament precedent for that? Well, it's interesting.

You look at the structure in Genesis or this part of Genesis, you have Adam, Noah, and Abraham. You have two genealogies separating these three with 10 generations each, roughly ending in three sons in both cases. And there's a parallel structure with them.

There are blessings, the command to multiply and subdue the land, and there are curses. The connection is most explicit with Adam and Noah, but it's also implied with Abraham as well. Blessed will be those who bless you.

Cursed will be those who curse you. Also, how Noah receives his name in Genesis 5:29. The ground had been cursed, but Noah's father gives him the name Noah because he's hoping that the Lord will grant rest from the ground that the Lord our God has cursed. Abraham's seed, God raised up Abraham.

He chose Abraham because he said, I know you will teach your descendants to follow me. He chooses Abraham and his particular seed of promise as steps back towards paradise, as steps back towards the restoration that had been lost in Adam. Now, Paul may actually reverse the idea of some interpreters, for example, Philo, because it was commonly believed by Hellenistic Jewish interpreters, well, at least is exemplified by Philo, that the first man of Genesis 1 was greater than the second man in Genesis 2. So, they spoke of the first man being greater than the second man, whereas Paul speaks of the second man being greater than the first man, but ultimately fulfilling the purpose of the first, not contrasting two figures in Genesis 1 and 2, but that Christ would be greater than the first.

The rhetoric of 5:15 through 21, is really beautiful rhetoric. Whether Paul knew rhetorical terminology or not, he certainly was good at this. In comparison or synchresis, you would compare two objects and you would often compare them point by point, which Paul does here.

He does something similar rhetorically in 2 Corinthians 11 for a few verses. But objects need not be equivalent, as you see in 5:15a. Christ is so much greater than Adam. So, the comparison is not of equivalent matters, but sometimes you would compare something bad and something good.

Sometimes you compare something good and something better. You could compare all sorts of different things. Paired antithesis drives some of the point.

In other words, you have these pairs that are contrasted with each other. It's a good rhetorical device. And in this case, he's working from lesser to greater.

That was a Jewish interpretive principle that in Judea was called Kava Omer. It was also common as an interpretive principle elsewhere, Greek and Roman world, although they didn't use the language Kava Omer. Paul speaks of the superiority of the second man in 1 Corinthians 15:45 through 47.

And he's this is part of this idea here. He's pairing Adam and Christ, but Christ is so much greater. Many scholars think that sin and death are also personified here.

Some of the church fathers thought so, and that would be a familiar rhetorical technique. One term that we have six times in verses 15 through 20, unfortunately, this is not a happy term, but *per optima*. This is the word transgression.

It recalls chapter four and verse 25. And actually, it's used for Adam's sin in Wisdom of Solomon 10:1. That was a probably fairly widely circulated Hellenistic Jewish work in the first century and probably by the first century. Some date it as coming out in the first century, but I see it as already being used by Paul a number of times.

And I think it probably was already in circulation wide enough that Paul takes for granted that some people will catch his allusions like in 1 Corinthians 2 and so forth. But he's alluding back to 4:25 with *per optima*, with transgression there. Most explicitly in 5:18 where he also repeats another key term from there, *dikaiosis*.

So, you have the transgression and you also have God's verdict of righteousness. So, he continues to flesh out the meaning of the gospel summary back in chapter four verses 24 and 25. You can have the summary, but now we're getting more in detail.

Christ is superior to Adam. Thus, Paul repeatedly stresses the language of grace and the free gift. That appears eight times in 5:15 through 17 and two times in 5:20 and 21.

He speaks of righteousness, but he speaks here of righteousness not earned, but bestowed. Those who are in Christ should live righteousness because of God's gift, not in order to achieve it. 5:17, the reign of death and the reign of believers.

This may refer to the eschatological kingdom, Daniel 7:22, when God's people would receive the kingdom. It also might evoke the context of Adam regaining the role that he lost because God appointed humanity originally to be vizier over all creation. In chapter eight and verse 29, we see that even though we had God's image Adam says that we are now going to be conformed to the image of Christ.

So, there may be an allusion to the Adam context, although I'm not sure that that's quite as obvious. And he speaks of life in verses 17, 18, and 21. Well, presumably he refers to the resurrected life of the coming age.

That's what he speaks of in 2:7, 4:17, 5:10, 6:10, and 22, and 23, and 8:11, and 13. 5:18 to 19 develops more of this deliberately lopsided contrast. Adam's transgression brought death to all.

Jesus' act of obedience brings life and righteousness to all who are in him. All are born as Adam's descendants, depending on him as flesh. But all who are baptized into solidarity with Christ in chapter six, verse three, we are dependent on him through the spirit, 8:1 through 11.

Paul cannot be teaching here universalism, which is an idea that some have developed based on the parallelism. The parallelism is lopsided. All those who are in Adam are sinners.

All those who are in Christ are saved, but not everybody's in Christ. That's the way he's going to go on to talk about being baptized into Christ. He speaks of the eschatological destruction of some people in 2:5, 9:22, Philippians 3:19, and 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Context delimits Adam's and Christ's effects on those who are in each of them.

The future tense of being righteous suggests that the completion of this is fulfilled eschatologically. In verses 18 and 19, Jesus' act of obedience that reverses Adam's disobedience. This relates to Jesus' death for us and the Father's loving design that we saw back in chapter five, verses six through 10.

And Jesus' obedience where he humbled himself to the point of the cross. We have a possible contrast with Adam seeking divinity, especially if Paul has in mind the same thing that he may have in mind in Philippians 2:6 through 8, Genesis 3:5, Adam was told that he could become like God. And so, he sinned.

But in Philippians chapter two, verses six through eight, Jesus, although he was in the form of God, didn't think equality with God thing to be grasped. And he humbled himself, took on him the form of a servant, and humbled himself in obedience, even to the point of death on the shameful cross. Well, here also it speaks of Jesus' obedience and humbling himself to his death on the cross.

Jesus doesn't merely reverse Adam's punishment. Jesus came to form a new basis for humanity, enabling people to be right with God and enabling people to serve God fully from the heart. Chapter eight, verses two through four and 29.

Again, verse 29 seems to be speaking of something that's completed in the future, but this is something where Jesus ultimately came to restore humanity to a rightful relationship with God, not just to make it so we wouldn't be punished, although that's obviously included. We have some contrasts here. Adam sought a greater life for himself and it yielded death.

Jesus, by submitting to death in obedience to God, brought life. Adam introduced sin to those in solidarity with him. Jesus now introduces true righteousness, 5:19, that stems from solidarity with his obedience.

So, we're actually seeing Paul explain this from multiple angles. Sometimes we take one of his angles and we impose it on all the others, but there are multiple angles here and we should celebrate all of them. Although some of them Paul addresses more than others.

The righteous law in 5:20 exposes sin to condemnation. 5:20 and 5:13, the law didn't transform Adamites from the heart. The children of Adam didn't transform us from the heart.

The expectation was that the law made them more righteous than the Gentiles. And Paul addresses that 6:15, 7:12, 7:14, 7:16, and 7:22. Paul shocks them into attention.

He does that elsewhere, 6:14, 7:5, 7:8-9. He says elsewhere, the law is perfect, 7:12, but it informed rather than transformed. So here he says in 5:20, hey, the law just exposes your sin.

It makes you guiltier. Unless of course, it's written in your heart by the spirit, chapter eight in verse two. So, you've got a contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant.

God's people would obey the new covenant. That's the main difference that's articulated in Jeremiah 31:31 to 34. Not like the first covenant that I made with your ancestors, which they broke, but I myself will write my laws in your hearts and in your minds, and I will cause you to walk in my ways.

So, the law is written in the hearts. He's talked about that in 2:29. He'll talk about it in 7:6 and 8:2, echoing probably Jeremiah 31:33.

In chapter eight in verse three, he's going to talk about this idea again, what the law could not do. It could not make people righteous, but God had done that in Christ, chapter eight in verse three. The climax of the antitheses with Adam and Christ, verses 20 and 21, the greater the sin, the greater the grace that counted it.

Well, we can see massive contrasts, just a whole binary way of arranging the world in Paul's thinking. Adam's transgression led to judgment and condemnation. With Jesus, many transgressions, were delivered from that by the free gift, justification or acquittal.

Adam's transgression led to death's reign. But what Jesus did with grace and the gift of righteousness led to those in Christ who were reign with him. Adam's transgression led to condemnation in 5.18. Jesus' righteous act, that is his obedient death, leads to justification, and acquittal in life, in the same verse.

Adam's disobedience, through that the many became sinners. Through Jesus' act of obedience, especially humbling himself to the death of the cross, many are brought to be righteous, 5.19. The law increased the transgression, 5.20. Yet grace increased all the more, 5.20. Sin reigned in death, grace reigned through righteousness to

eternal life. Don't present your members for sin, present your members for righteousness.

He contrasts the law and grace in 6:14 and 6:15. Sin leads to death, 6:16. Obedience leads to righteousness in 6:16. Slaves of sin in 6:17. Obedience to the teaching, 6:17. Slaves of sin and being free from righteousness, the contrast to that is slaves of righteousness and freedom from sin. Presenting one's members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness leads to more lawlessness, 6:19. Presenting one's members as slaves to righteousness for consecration to God, also in 6:19. Death in 6:22 to 6:23, consecration to God leading to eternal life in the same verses. Death to the former spouse, the law in 7:3 and 4. Married to Christ in 7:4. Fleshly passions worked in the body via the law to bring about fruit for death in 7:5. Well, instead we bear fruit for God, 7:4. Released from and dead to the law in 7:6. He speaks of the oldness of the letter in 7:6 and probably evoking the old humanity in 6:6. The newness of the spirit in 7:6 and probably evoking the newness of life in 6:4. Law of sin and death, 8:2. Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus in the same passage.

The law could not deliver from sin, but God did deliver from sin. He contrasts the flesh and the spirit in 8:3 through 9. The fleshly perspective is death, 8:6. The spirit perspective, the spirit of God's perspective in us is life and peace, 8:6. The body is dead on account of sin, 8:10. The spirit of God is life on account of righteousness, 8:10. Those who live according to the flesh must die. Those who kill the works of the body, the sinful works of the body will live, 8:13. He contrasts the spirit of slavery in 8:15 versus the spirit of adoption in 8:15. All that to say that Paul is setting up a whole series of contrasts and I won't make note of them, speak of them explicitly every time, but just keep in mind that these are there.

Now with that, I'm going into chapter 6, which I believe continues the thought of chapter 5. Romans chapter 6, which emphasizes Christ's death in 6:1 through 10. Well, in 5:12, 15, 17, and 21, he's been talking about how Adam's sin incurred death. Jesus experienced that death once for all.

In him, our Adamic death that we were destined for has already been accomplished once for all. Jesus didn't merit death. So, he therefore provides a new way of life to those who are in him, verses 18 and 19.

We're born into humanity in Adam, we're baptized into Christ, 6:3 and 4, thus into a new corporate identity. Now, before I do work through some specific issues in chapter 6, I want to bring up something here about Paul's gospel, the message that he's proclaiming in a more general way because that will help set the table for this. Paul speaks of righteousness.



Well, that language is sometimes forensic, especially in a forensic context. Chiosune can mean justification, it can mean acquittal, as well as it can mean justice, and so forth. But when God says, let there be light, there's light.

When God declares us righteous, we become a new creation. So, what that means is that from God's standpoint, we are now defined by our new identity in Christ. In terms of what we have in ourselves, the feelings and memories from the past are still embedded in our brains.

Our brains, we've already wired them to certain kinds of behavior. People may still think of us in the same old way, but in God's sight, our identity is new. We can live righteousness.

We're no longer what we were in Adam, now we are what we are in Christ. A new world is coming. We are the first fruits raised up with Christ.

Our identity is in him, and we need to remember that. In terms of Paul's theology, everything is from Christ and from the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit, power for living God's character, the gifts of the Spirit, power for ministry, everything is God's gift.

Grace is just totally central to Paul's theology. And he ought to have known because of what he started out with and the grace that he received and recognized that he received. So here we go on to learn in Romans chapter 6 verses 1 through 4 of how we've been baptized into Christ's death.

We have died with Christ. Conversion in Judaism. Well, if you were converted, if you were male, you had to be circumcised.

At least most people agreed with that. Sometimes some people made exceptions for some Gentiles, like a king of Ediabim. There was a debate about how far he should go with that.

And someone insisted he needed to be circumcised. Somebody said, no, that's probably not a good idea. They went ahead and did it.

But circumcision was considered mandatory if somebody wanted to become a full member of the covenant. Well, Paul's already addressed that aspect of conversion. We have spiritual circumcision.

Gentiles don't need to be physically circumcised. But there was another act that was expected for conversion to Judaism. And that was immersion in water because one needed to wash away the impurities of one's former Gentile life.

There were different kinds of ceremonial lustrations in antiquity. In many temples, you'd have to wash yourself before you went in. Jewish people had various ceremonial lustrations.

The Essenes seemed to have been obsessed with it. They bathed quite a lot. But for mainstream Judaism, had regular ceremonial purification.

They had mikvah, mikvahot. These were immersion pools that you would step down into and dunk yourself and then step out. According to Jewish tradition, this had to be done in running water or living water of some sort.

So, you could use rainwater because it was originally running water. You could use water from a river. But if it was a mikvah, this pool, how did you make sure you got some water in it that wasn't drawn water, that wasn't carried by vessels? Well, you could have a cistern, a water tank, and then you could have a conduit from that water tank to this mikvah, put a stone in there to keep the water from flowing when you didn't want it to flow.

But when it hadn't rained for a long time, sometimes these mikvahot got really filthy. So, you had the chief priests, the Sadducees, who lived in the upper city of Jerusalem near the Temple Mount. Excavations show that in their homes, they often had a ritual immersion pool.

They also had another pool where they could use whatever kind of water they needed to clean themselves off, sometimes after they'd been in the ritual immersion pool. But in any case, all through Judea, we see this was a big thing, these immersion pools. Now, that was a regular kind of washing.

But what about a once-for-all kind of washing, a kind of turning from an old life to a new life, like what John the Baptist expected of his hearers and what Jesus expected of his followers? Well, we do have something like that attested in Judaism. It's attested in a number of places, Mishneh Pesachim 8, 8, and it's attested in the Tosefta and so on, where people say, well, that's later. Well, we also have the logical principle that if people had to be purified from all sorts of other things, they surely would have had to have been purified from being a Gentile, because you'd have to be purified from contact with Gentiles and so on, especially if they were idolaters before.

But beyond that, we also have other records. Now, our rabbinic sources are later. Those are the only rabbinic sources we have.

And rabbinic sources are the sources where we have the most abundant sources for ancient Judaism. But we also have some earlier sources, and one of them is from Epictetus. Juvenal, a Roman satirist probably also says something about this, but

Epictetus talks about, he's a Gentile philosopher, talks about how converts to Judaism would be immersed in water.

So, this was known in the diaspora. It wasn't as central as circumcision, but it was something that was understood as an act of conversion to Judaism. Now, it makes good sense then why John the Baptist took this over, certainly why Jesus had his followers take this over.

In John chapter four, he has his followers baptizing. Matthew chapter 28, and Acts chapter two, it seems to characterize Jesus' early movement in that they practiced this baptism. In Jewish tradition, probably this was done even on the Mikveh Ot, on the Temple Mount, where you would be immersed naked.

Probably John didn't do that with co-ed baptisms in the Jordan, but later rabbis went so far as to say that if you had a string of a bean between your teeth, and unfortunately I didn't brush my teeth just before this lecture, but if you had so much as a string of a bean between your teeth, it would invalidate the immersion because you were partly covered. In any case, probably that wasn't done when you had mixed-gender places, but in principle, Jewish people believe that conversion changed your ethnic allegiance and even your family ties. Gentiles sometimes condemned Jews for making proselytes who would then turn their back on their people and their country because they became Jews from a Gentile perspective as well.

Well, we have a solidarity. We're not just baptized into solidarity with the Jewish community by this normal Jewish proselyte baptism. We have been baptized into Christ.

We have expressed our solidarity with Christ in baptism. In 1 Corinthians 10.1-2, Paul says our ancestors were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. And he's using that as an analogy for Christian baptism because he's trying to warn the Corinthian believers, well, you know, they were baptized like us and they ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink, the water from the rock and the manna from heaven, and God judged them.

So don't think your baptism and your partaking of the Lord's Supper is going to necessarily protect you if you're living an ungodly life. Specifically, there, he mentions things like murmuring and complaining against each other, sexual immorality, and eating food off of the idols. But baptism was an act of conversion, but it also baptized you into a shared corporate experience that was understood in Judaism.

And it's also understood when you're baptized into Christ, you're baptized into solidarity with Christ and with his followers. We can compare the Passover ritual

where in the Passover, Jewish people would say, not our ancestors alone, but we also have experienced this. And they were kind of reenacting that in the Passover.

Well, here Paul says, that because we've been baptized into Christ, we share Christ's death and resurrection. Now, does this mean that it's the water that washes away our sins literally, or is that figurative in a sense? What does Paul mean by baptism? This is a big debate. This debate will not be solved in this video, and I'm not going to try to solve it, but I'm going to give you what I think based on what I've already said here.

Baptism was understood as an act of conversion. So, it naturally communicated that idea of conversion. That doesn't mean that if a person believed in Christ and got martyred on the way to their baptism, they weren't converted.

They were planning to carry out this act. And it's really when they believed in Christ, I believe that the transformation takes place. Not everybody agrees with that, but that's my understanding of it.

I see it as kind of like an engagement ring. When I got engaged to my fiancée, who's now my wife, I could have said, well, I want you to marry me. Well, actually I did say that.

And she could have said, but she didn't happily, partly because we were not in the same country at the time, and therefore it would have been rather difficult logistically. But she could have said, okay, I don't want to just hear it. I want to see the ring.

Baptism is like the engagement ring. It's like, okay, here's the act of commitment that shows that we're serious about it, but it's not the washing itself that saves us. Now, in the first century, this was done by immersion.

Well, at least as far as we know, early on it was done by immersion. That was the Jewish practice for conversion, and presumably, everything we know about it suggests that was also the Christian practice. And it was an act of faith.

It was the way believers would show their faith. What do you do with second-generation converts? What do you do when you've got children in your family? You're baptized as an adult. You've got children.

Do you baptize them? That's a question that actually arose in subsequent generations. I don't think we have it explicitly, and most scholars don't think we have it explicitly addressed in the New Testament, although some do find hints of it. So that's not something I can answer as a New Testament scholar, per se.

There is a very early document, the Didache, that does suggest that, okay, the ideal is to be baptized in running water. If you don't have that, you can use water in other forms. So, some of the early Christians did grapple with this and understood that the point of it could be communicated in another way.

And they also, in time, believed that a child could be baptized and then could own their baptism in a sense later on when they had their own personal faith. Now, I'm not sure the New Testament teaches that. However, having said that, if somebody is baptized earlier and later on they own their own personal faith and they look back to that as their baptism, it might fulfill the same purpose.

So, I have to leave it to you to decide what you feel comfortable with. But I'm just trying to give you some of the information based on the New Testament. Actually, a lot of these issues came up later, and so they're addressed later on in the Church.

But these are some of the things addressed here. But the point that we can make in Romans 6 is that by this act of conversion, by this way of showing our solidarity with Christ, we can look back on that and say, okay, well, we have died with Christ, we'll share in his resurrection. And no longer is it what we were in Adam, the old person, chapter six and verse six, but what we are in Christ, chapter six and verse four, where it speaks of the newness of life, of this contrast between Adam and Christ carrying over to here.

Later rabbis said that baptism made one a new person. I believe, if my memory serves me right, it's somewhere around Babylonian Talmud, Yebomoth 46 and 47. But baptism made one a new person.

It dissolved former ties so that a slave who was baptized would no longer remain a slave to the slave's master. Thus, Jewish masters converting slaves decided, well, we don't want them to become a new person such that they're no longer a slave. So, what we'll do, we will just preempt that.

We will put them in bonds, and baptize them in their bonds. And when they come up, they're still in bonds, they're still our servant. That was an interesting accommodation to their understanding of becoming like a new person when you convert to Judaism.

Now, Paul is emphasizing all the way through six, one through 10, that we have died with Christ. He says it repeatedly in different ways, and how Christ died once for all the sin, and therefore we have died with him to sin. But he's got to answer the question that he raises early in the chapter.

Well, what then? Shall we sin that grace may abound? He says at the end of chapter five, he says, God forbid, me genetah, may it never be. How should we who died with

Christ to sin live any longer in it? We need to look not at our past. We need to look at what has happened to us in Christ.

And remember that that's our identity. That's our basis for moving forward. We were justified by faith.

We were set right with God by faith. Well, if we take that faith a bit further and really believe that we have been righted, why not live like we've been righted, like what God has done for us in Christ? This requires some rethinking of who we really are, of what our identity is. Philosophers often emphasize the mind.

And they thought that, as Stoics talked about, you should view yourself from a new philosophic standpoint and thereby view the whole world from a new philosophic standpoint. This was a sort of cognitive therapy. But unlike Paul, the Stoics were doing this by their own effort.

It didn't involve an actual supernatural transformation. Paul is saying we have died to sin in Christ. It's not a matter of what we feel.

It's not a matter of what others think about us. It's not even a matter of what we think about ourselves. This has happened to us in Christ.

But if we do learn to think that way, it's going to change the way we act. It's going to change the way that we behave. Death with Christ in 6:1 through 10, it can affect our self-image and our identity.

The new identity is not dependent on our believing it even. It depends on Christ's finished work. Well, this new identity in Jewish thought, Jewish people believed that sin would be put to death.

Well, later rabbis spoke of the evil impulse, the Yetzirah, being taken out and slain in the sight of all the nations on the Day of Judgment. But earlier Jewish people also spoke of sin being destroyed on the Day of Judgment, that eschatologically sin would be overthrown. It would be no more.

The world would be full of righteousness. But for us, this promised Messiah, this promised resurrection, this promised future kingdom has already broken into history because the promised king has come. And the promised king has been raised from the dead.

And we are in solidarity with him. So, what that means for us is that the not yet is already partly already. God's kingdom is already at work in our lives.

The work is finished by Christ, but believing it helps us to live that way. Embracing the truth about our new identity. Romans 1 speaks of the truth about God.

Romans chapters 3 and 4 talk about the truth about Jesus. Romans chapter 6 and verse 11 talk about embracing the truth about ourselves in unity with Christ or in union with Christ. Union not meaning we become Christ in the sense of some ideas of mysticism, but union in terms of being united with Christ.

We have here what scholars often call a tension between the indicative and the imperative. The indicative is what we are. The imperative is how we should behave.

And so scholars speak of this, the indicative versus the imperative. We need to be what we are. God set aside Israel.

He set apart Israel. He consecrated Israel and said, be holy as I am holy. We see the importance of the mind in this.

Again, we'll see it in chapter 8. We'll see it in chapter 12 in verse 2, the renewing of our minds. We learn to think about ourselves in a new way. Faith is trusting what God says.

And that is what brings us to salvation, to begin with. It breaks the power of sin. And it's also what teaches us how we can live like we've been freed from sin.

Remember in chapter 4, Genesis 15.6, the word reckon, God reckoned righteousness to Abram's account. God accounted Abraham as righteous. The word reckon appears 11 times in Romans 4. God reckoned it.

But here it uses the same term for reckoning. Here we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin. God reckons us new.

We need to get our perspective in line with how God views us and act accordingly. Simply agreeing with and embracing what God already says about us insofar as we're in Christ. You can think of 1 Corinthians 1:30 where Christ by God has been made to us wisdom, even righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

We've been righted by grace, by God's action in Christ. Origen, a Greek commentator on the book of Romans, Romans 6:11 puts it this way. Whoever thinks or considers that they are dead will not sin.

For example, if lust for a woman gets hold of me or if greed for silver, gold, or riches stirs me, and I say in my heart that I have died with Christ, the lust is immediately quenched and sin disappears because he embraces that by faith. This is Gerald Bray's translation of this. It goes on to speak of slavery.

Actually, the thought is introduced in chapter 6, verse 6, but it goes on in verses 12 through 23 to speak of this as well. Greek and Roman thinkers spoke of slavery to false ideas, slavery to passions, slavery to having to depend on others, and so forth. Jewish thinkers, valued the people's political liberation when they spoke of being free, but they also spoke of liberation from sin.

And they believed that someday there would be a full eschatological liberation. Now, the idea of freeing slaves, we know a lot about that from ancient literature. Some scholars like Adolf Deissmann have pointed to the idea of sacral manumission, where somebody was freed from a particular slaveholder and they were sold in the service of a temple.

Some people have viewed that as background here. The problem for viewing that as background here is just that it wasn't all that common and Paul doesn't specify something that narrow. Likely he hasn't in view just the more general idea.

But in Rome, people understood this idea of freeing slaves because it happened very often in Rome. Slaves of Roman citizens who were freed became Roman citizens themselves if they were above 30 and met certain criteria, which most of them did. Sometimes Roman slaveholders used this as a way to avoid supporting older slaves.

But some have suggested that Roman slaveholders may have freed something like half of their household slaves, or half of household slaves, by sometime in their life would have the opportunity to become free. I don't know if it's that high a number, but it was extremely common, quite unlike what we have here in the Americas in my continent, where less than one-tenth of one percent of slaves were actually freed before the Civil War. There were mutual obligations between slaves and slaveholders.

Freed persons would still perform certain things for the former slaveholder, and the slaveholder would help the freed person to advance politically or in other ways. Also, a person wasn't completely free as a freed person. Basically, they were under ordinary circumstances.

But if the slaveholder was assassinated and it wasn't found who did it, if it was believed that one of the slaves did it, all the slaves would be killed, and so would all the freed persons. So there still were ties there. But Paul is more radical than that.

He speaks about how death ended all obligations. Now, I should mention that when it talks about dying and rising with Christ, especially in the early 20th century, there were some who tried to talk about the mystery religions and dying and rising gods. Well, there were some mystery religions that did talk about something like dying and rising gods, but not dying and rising like Jesus did.



They weren't thinking bodily. Some of these weren't exactly bodily to begin with. But they were thinking of seasonal revivification.

These myths were tied to new life in the spring. And a lot of the supposed dying and rising god myths actually arose after the spread of Christianity. And some of them were first interpreted this way by later church fathers.

And some of them borrowed elements from Christianity, which was already widespread by the time they came up with this. But we do have some earlier examples, I think, of dying and rising gods. But in terms of people dying and rising with the gods, now that is not very well attested in this period.

And you can see how people could have developed that idea and how that could relate to this. But when Paul speaks of resurrection, it goes back to Daniel 12:2, the language of resurrection, his way of describing resurrection. He's thinking in Jewish terms.

This is the Jewish conception of the eschatological resurrection of the dead. Jesus is the first fruits of that resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:20 or so. Jesus is the first to rise from the dead.

Often Paul says he is raised from among the dead in Greek. His language means that. Resurrection in a Jewish context meant a transformation of the body.

It was not tied to the seasonal revivification of nature or something like that. So just to say there are reasons why that view in the early 20th century is not really very widely held now. You may hear things like this on the Internet, but in terms of among scholars, it's not very widely held.

In verse 23, he contrasts the wages of sin, which is death, with the free gift of God for eternal life. The term for wages was often a military term. Some people think that in verse 13 where it says to present yourselves as instruments to God, the term there, *hapla*, it can also mean armor or weapons, present yourselves as weapons to God.

And he will probably use that kind of language later on in Romans 13. But at this point, there are not enough details there to make us think that he's talking about military imagery. But this is often a military term for wages.

But in the context of slavery, well, slaves could earn wages. It was called a *peculium*. They could save money on the side.

I mentioned earlier they could buy their own freedom with that. Sometimes they didn't really want to buy their own freedom. Sometimes they had a good situation.

They were household managers or whatever. It's, again, very different from the kind of slavery we read about in many other places. And sometimes they could even, you know, they could buy slaves.

I mean, they had this money officially. It was the master's, but basically it was theirs to dispose of as they wanted to. People can earn wages.

But the contrast with that, and you have an applied contrast with that back in 4:4, people can earn wages, but the contrast with that is a gift. It's a free gift. In antiquity, when people thought about free gifts, they thought about benefactors, and they thought about the importance of showing gratitude.

In fact, in Greek, *charis* can mean grace, benefaction, and gifting, and it can mean gratefulness because those concepts were tied together. Well, chapter six seems not too hard to follow, but chapter seven may be the most controversial chapter in the entire letter to the Romans. And scholars have often divided over this.

There is a majority view today as opposed to a minority view, but there's been a history of great division over Romans chapter seven. And we will start with Romans chapter seven in the next session.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 7, Romans 5:12-6:23.