

Grace of God

By C. Stephenson

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." (1Jo 5:3 NKJV) So, what is against us in the law—the curse of the law—is the final penalty& consequence for disobedience—eternal death. And we were all slaves to that curse, for we were all 'sold under sin'. (Rom 7:14). From the time that we could first demand our own way as toddlers, our nature was bent on going the wrong way. Even a very small child is selfish, greedy and rebellious. Tell a two-year-old to 'Come' and he will probably run the other way. It's easy for us to acknowledge the foolish—and often dangerous—rebellion of little children, yet we think we can flaunt God's laws—especially if we think 'it isn't hurting anyone else'—ending up as foolish as a two-year-old!

Disobeying God's laws is the way to death and this wicked world is quickly heading towards total destruction because of sin! The end result would be eternal oblivion if it weren't for the Grace of God! Giving up His perfect, righteous Son to die in our stead is the greatest Favor God could give us! But it doesn't stop there! He blesses us, heals us, gives us gifts of talents and abilities, answers our prayers, shows us the way to happiness and gives us His own Spirit so that we become His very children. All this is God's Grace! When Christ took on Himself the full penalty for all sin for all mankind, our 'debt'—eternal damnation—was nailed to the cross and 'done away' with—because it was paid in full—once—for all time.(Heb 9:12) Also called 'The Handwriting of Ordinances' (Col 2:14) That is God's Favor to us—His Grace—a most astounding and beautiful act of love by the very Creator of the heavens and earth!

The Apostle Paul makes this act of Grace quite clear:" This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. "Then He says, "*I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.*" (Heb 8:12) For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. (Heb 10:22 NLT)... But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed...to all and on all who believe. For there is no

difference; Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. [Rom 3: 20-22, 28, 31 NKJV]

However, as already stated, there is a question of how this all applies after conversion, each time we sin. Many in God's Church think we are clean and reconciled to God after baptism until the first time we sin and that, until we repent, we are cut off from God. Many ministers talk about being finally 'clean' at Passover each year as if we are unclean the rest of the year. They even joke about how nice it might be to be hit by a Mack truck when leaving the Passover service since we are so 'clean' then. But how does God see us? How does Grace work after conversion? The Bible has much to say about our status as God's Elect!

Conditions of a True Christian:

1. Sealed *"Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."* (2 Cor. 1:22 KJV)

Strong's Definition: "To stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation (literally or figuratively); by implication, to keep secret, to attest: — (set a, set to) seal up, stop. "Revelation 7:3-8 tells us that God's servants are 'sealed' in their foreheads. A 'seal' in ancient times was a small piece of wax affixed to a document (usually a scroll) with the owner's mark pressed into it (using a ring or stamp). One of the purposes of a seal was to verify a document's authenticity—such as a decree from a king, emperor, or other dignitary. The seal would have to be broken in order to unroll the document and read it, similar to today's "tamper-resistant seals" on postal packages. Another purpose was to indicate ownership. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia suggests: "God by His Spirit indicates who are His, as the owner sets his seal on his property; and just as documents are sealed up until the proper time for opening them, so Christians are 'sealed' up by the Holy Spirit "unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30; 2 Co. 1:22) Or, as the NIV puts it: "...He has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything He has promised us." (2 Cor 1:22) A third purpose of a 'seal' was as a guarantee to ensure laws, decrees, judgements, etc. were not changed. After Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, King Darius sealed the rock covering the den, using his own signet and the signet of his lords, so that Daniel's

sentence could not be changed. No one was allowed to open the lion's den until the following morning and the king's 'seal' made sure of that—even for the king himself! God's 'seal' on us—His 'Signature' which proves we belong to Him—is His Holy Spirit, and this 'seal' is placed in our foreheads—in our minds—where the Holy Spirit resides. (Rev 7:3-4) This means He has 'sealed' us as a guarantee that we are His Children and will be with Him in His Kingdom. No creature in heaven or earth can break or tamper with that seal. God's 'stamp' on us is impregnable by anyone but us! If we turn away from Our Heavenly Father, rejecting His promise of Eternal Life, we would 'fall' from Grace! *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," (Eph 1:13 KJV) "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph 4:30 KJV) "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." (Rev 7:3-4 KJV)*

2. Sanctified/Made Holy *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"...And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (Jhn 17:17, 19 KJV)*

Strong's defines Sanctify: "to make holy, i.e. (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate: —hallow, be holy, sanctify; set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His." Being made 'Holy' means we belong to the Holy God. We are 'set apart' from the rest of humanity as God's son or daughter because He has given us the 'seed'—or the 'earnest'—of His very Life, His Eternal Spirit!

When we are converted, God accepts our 'death' in Christ and 'raises' us with Christ as a New Creation. But what happens to us when we sin after that? Are we no longer dead in Christ? Are we no longer raised with Him and a new creation? No longer considered Holy? *"I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you Holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as He did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." (1Cor 1:2 NLT) "...I am writing to God's church in Corinth and to all of his Holy people throughout Greece." (2Co 1:1 NLT)*

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's Holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. ... I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called--His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance." (Eph 1:1, 18 NLT) *"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,"* (Heb 2:11 NKJV) *"So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's Holy people. You are members of God's family."* (Eph 2:19 NLT) *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified [made Holy]."* [Act 20:32 KJV] Also found in: Act 26:18; Rom 15:16; 1Co 1:2; 1Co 6:11; 2Ti 2:21; Heb 2:11; Heb 10:10, 29; Jude 1:1

If we are once made 'Holy' by Christ's Blood, do we become 'unholy' when we sin? Do we need to be sanctified again every time we sin after receiving the Holy Spirit? "For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time." [Heb 10:10 NLT Also Heb 9:12, 26, 28; Heb 10:2, 10; 1 Pe 3:18] If every sin after conversion makes us unholy again, wouldn't 'once for all time' be meaningless? Like a child that has messed up, we do need to ask our Father to forgive us and repent—change. But do we ask forgiveness because we go back to being 'unholy' again? If we have accepted Christ's blood to cover our sins and were to incur the death penalty again, wouldn't we become unholy, and wouldn't Christ have to die again?" And He did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, He has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice." (Heb 9:25-26 NLT) Christ's death obviously did not remove the capability of sinning from those who are converted, so what did it remove? *"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."* Rom 5:21

Isn't this saying that Grace—God's favor—has replaced the curse of death? And, if Grace reigns over death, and we are 'under' grace, how could we ever go back under the curse of eternal death? (Of course, if we were ever to despise God's

grace and refuse to repent/change, we could fall from grace and lose out on eternal life. That is the unforgivable sin.)

3. Free from Sin “For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” (Rom 6:18, 20, 22 KJV) As Christians, we often sin, still ‘miss the mark,’ and will never be perfect of and by ourselves. And no one—not even a converted Christian—can be ‘set free’ from physically & mentally sinning! So, what, then, are we ‘set free’ from? Isn’t it the holds it has on us—the power of sin? Most human fathers would not disown their children because they mess up and neither does God! Aren’t we still His children and under His grace even when we sin? “That is why He is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.” (Heb 9:15 NLT) Is there any point in telling us Christ has ‘set us free’ if the first time we sin after conversion we are again in bondage?

4. Not Under the Law “*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*” (Gal 3:23 KJV)]

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Gal 3:10 KJV) Strong’s defines ‘under’ as: “to be...subject to the power of any person or thing.” So, being born ‘under the law’ means born ‘under the power of’ the law’. The ‘power’ of the law is in the eternal consequences for breaking it—death—which we humans have no way of getting out of. Even if we could live a perfect life after conversion, (which of course is not possible!) it would not pay for our many past sins. Not being ‘under the law’ does NOT mean the law is no longer binding! Not being ‘under the law’ means: ‘no longer under the curse for disobedience to God’s law!’ Christ abolished that curse. We become children of God when we are baptized with God’s Spirit, and nothing can change that, as long as we remain steadfast! Christ gave his life to free [redeem] us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. (Titus 2:14)].

There is nothing we can do to erase the penalty for the past when we broke God's laws. There is only one way we can ever be free from that penalty and that is to accept Christ's perfect life in place of ours —perfecting us in God's sight, forever! The Apostle Paul understood this:

"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." (Heb 10:14 NASB) So, why do so many think we go back under the death penalty when we sin? Or that we are separated from Our Father when we sin, He who has already accepted us as 'perfect' through Christ's sacrifice? Did Paul mean we were 'perfected for all time' except two to twenty times a week when we sin? Christ freely gave His life to bring us out from under the curse of the law and we would be fools not to accept so great and loving a sacrifice!

As Paul tells the Church: *"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."* (Gal 5:18) *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid...Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* (Rom 6:14-15)

Obviously, there could be no sin if there was no law. Law defines sin and we are not free to break it! After all, if a murderer was pardoned and set free, he is not free to murder again! It should be obvious: We are not free to break the very laws Christ's death freed us from! So, what does Paul mean by 'not under the law'? That—through Christ's blood—we are not under the ultimate penalty of the law...it's terrible power of death. The curse of eternal death has been replaced with the earnest—the guarantee—of eternal LIFE—God's Holy Spirit! This means that, even though we sin after conversion, we do not incur the penalty—the 'curse'—of the law. That penalty (eternal damnation) was made null and void for those who have received the Holy Spirit and are a New Creation in Christ—our past sins paid for on the cross, and any future sins not imputed! After all, how could eternal death(consequence for any sin)& eternal life (the Holy Spirit) dwell in us at the same time??"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Gal 3:13) If we went back under that curse every time we sinned, wouldn't Christ's sacrifice have been in vain?

According to Strong's, Redeem means: "to purchase; specially, to redeem. Figuratively: Christ is said to have purchased his disciples i. e. made them, as it were, His private property." "...to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Gal 5:5 NKJV) "...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Tit 2:14 NKJV) Being redeemed means being 'bought back' from the curse of sin, just another way of saying we are cleansed from all our sins. And, once 'purified' and 'redeemed' (bought back) do we need to be purified/redeemed again because we still sin?" *...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,"* (1Pe 1:18 NKJV) *"And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,"* (Rev 5:9; also 14:3 NKJV) *"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb."* (Rev 14:4 NKJV)

5. God's Righteousness Imputed *"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!"* (Romans 5:17) The 'Gift of righteousness'—God's righteousness imputed to us—is how we are reconciled to God. But how is this gift of 'perfection' possible? *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."* (Rom 3:21-22) God has given us—as His begotten children—His own righteousness, through faith in Christ! This is done 'apart from'—or perhaps better translated, 'in spite of'—the law's requirements/consequences (which is eternal death). In other words, God is over-riding the debt we incurred from breaking His laws, accepting His Son's sacrifice in our stead; forgiving us all our past sins; and giving us His own righteousness to make us acceptable to Him forever! *"For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through Him God reconciled everything to Himself. He made peace with everything in heaven*

and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross." This includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault." (Col 1:19-22 NLT) Christ intercedes with us before the Father because He also was human and knows very well our temptations and trials. He 'vouches' for us, as it were: *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."* (Rev 3:5 NKJV) *"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"* (Heb 9:24 NKJV)

Until I was in college, I never knew that my own father had any real faults! All my young life my mother had told us children over and over how wonderful our father was—how sweet, kind, loving, wise, handsome. She built him up for us very often and never told us of his mistakes or shortcomings—we had to find those out for ourselves! Of course, I eventually realized my father had just as many faults as any of us have and I had to learn to balance my adoration with this new understanding. But perhaps this is what Christ does for us with the Father? Does He tell God how wonderful we really are—in spite of our many mistakes? Does He build us up to the Father and downplay our faults because He knows how hard we are trying? That is pure conjecture but one thing we do know: God has already accepted His Son's sacrifice to cover all sins forever.

And the most wonderful part of God's gift of righteousness is that it enables us to be perfect before God! Christ is even now presenting us to the Father as blameless and unrepachable—indeed perfect! This is made possible because Christ was 'made sin' for us and we have God's righteousness imputed to us and should therefore, live for Christ. *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."* (Heb 10:14 NKJV) *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2 Co 5:21 NKJV) *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:"* (Rom 4:5-6 NKJV) *"...it was accounted to him (Abraham's faith) for*

righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom 4:22-24 NKJV) Aren't we constantly fighting pride, selfishness, lust, hate, greed, being judgmental? Don't we fudge on God's laws more often than we care to admit? Do we really keep the Sabbath day completely Holy? Don't we end up talking about things totally unrelated to holiness? Trying to be perfect is a huge struggle constantly! If we became unacceptable to God every time we sinned, we would live in constant fear, wouldn't we? There is a very interesting phrase in Heb 9:28: "...Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." (NKJV) Could we 'eagerly' wait for Christ's return if we constantly feared we would be lost because of some last-minute, perhaps secret, evil found in us?! Christ not only paid for ALL of our past sins, but we are told we are made perfect by the gift of God's own righteousness imputed! Just as Paul tells us: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." [Rom 8:10] "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 5:21) "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Rom 10:4) "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" (1Cor 1:30 KJV) Or as the NLT has it: "God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin." "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" (Phil 3:9)

6. Passed From Death to Life *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24 KJV) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."(1John 3:14) "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 6:5, 11 KJV) "He who has the*

Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1Jo 5:12 NKJV) Isn't this saying that God moves us from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive—through the Holy Spirit? The world is 'dead' in their sins. We are the only humans truly 'alive,' because we are Spiritually begotten—with Christ in us and we in Him! Isn't that what Christ meant when He told one potential disciple, "Let the dead bury the dead?" (Matt 8:22) Of course we do have our part to play: "...that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Col 1:10 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mat 6:33 NKJV) "Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people." (Phil 2:14-15 NLT) "Let your speech always be with grace, [goodness, graciousness, kindness] seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." (Col 4:6) "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace [graciousness] unto the hearers." (Eph 4:29) "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." (Heb 2:1 NKJV) "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him," (Heb 2:3 NKJV) "So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God." (1 John 3:10 NLT) This scripture shows we must strive to live righteously. And how do we 'live righteously'? By obeying God's commandments!

"Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." (Rom 8:30 NKJV) "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (Rom 6:11 NKJV) "...that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit 3:7 NKJV) Many seem to believe that, although we are justified—made righteous—with God at baptism, the moment we sin again, we become unjustified/unrighteous. That would mean that, if we died with any sin—even 'secret' sins (Psa 90:8)—we would not receive

eternal life! Yet what man is going to die perfect? With no pride, vanity, selfishness, greed, lust, hate, or any other unrighteousness in him?

We are told we are justified in Christ, and thereby have peace with God, with His righteousness imputed to us. If sin is able to make our justification and peace null and void, aren't we back where we started from??

8. Reconciled to God Reconciliation to God—by the forgiveness of sins--was accomplished through the shedding of Christ's blood—His death. *"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (2 Cor 5:17-19) Strong's defines Reconciliation as: "Return into favor". Christ paid His sinless life in place of ours, reconciling us—making us right with—giving us favor with—God. God cannot abide sin and turned His back on His Son when He was laden with the sins of the world on the cross. Christ had never been separated from His Father before, in all eternity, and was in agony. Didn't He pay this awful price so that—once were reconciled to Our Father—we would never again be separated from Him? Didn't Christ suffer that separation for us? —once for all time? Wasn't it part of His payment for our sins? *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* (Rom 5:10 KJV) *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled"* (Col 1:21 KJV) Does it make sense that we could have a portion of God's actual Eternal Spirit dwelling in us and—at the same time—not be reconciled to Him? [Psa 51:11] No Longer Condemned *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* (Rom 8:1 KJV)

Strong's defines 'condemnation' as: 'damnatory sentence'. This 'damnatory sentence' Paul is speaking of is like any criminal who has been sentenced to death for his crimes, except that our sins sentence us to eternal death! *"The wages of sin is [eternal] death."* (Rom 6:23) But the rest of this scripture is our great hope! *"But the gift of God is eternal life."* Once we accept the sacrifice of Christ and His

Spirit, we are no longer condemned! The ‘wages’ we earned in the past have been taken care of and our present and future sins are no longer imputed to us! *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*(Jhn 3:18 NKJV) Why would Paul say we are ‘no longer condemned’ if he believed that every time we sinned we went right back under condemnation? Isn’t the saying that Christ’s payment for our sins has removed the curse —the ‘damnable sentence’—for past as well as future sins? Paul spoke simply: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”* He doesn’t add...‘except every time you sin’. Being ‘in’ Christ Jesus means we are a New Creation composed of God’s Holy Spirit. We now have His Righteousness imputed to us and Christ living His life in us. The sinful body is dead but God’s Spirit in us makes us alive. We live in Christ and for Christ; and God’s righteousness in us makes it all possible! *“...God sending his own Son...condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*(Rom 8:3-4, 6-10 KJV)

9. Sins not Imputed/Blessed *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”* (Rom 4:7-8 NKJV) Strong’s defines ‘impute’ as: “to pass to one's account.” When we become a New Creation in Christ, we still ‘miss the mark’ (sin). But isn’t this saying God doesn’t hold those in Christ accountable for sin, because we are ‘risen’ with Him (in baptism) and are now His blessed children? *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Mat25:34) *“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”*(Rev19:9)*“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection”* (Rev 20:6) From the moment we receive the Holy Spirit, our past sins are forgiven,

which means we are also blessed, holy, justified, and reconciled to God. Still, we are human and all of us sin after conversion.

But, if each sin was accounted to us, causing us to incur the eternal death penalty again, wouldn't we be in need of a savior again?

10. Dead to the Law/Dead to Sin *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ..."* (Rom 7:4 KJV) *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom 6:2) 'Dead to the law' doesn't mean the law is no longer 'operating'. We 'died' with Christ when we accepted His sacrifice for our sins, but the law did not die! *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*(Rom 3:31) *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Rom 6:2)"**"What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid."*(Rom 6:15) 'Dead to sin' (Rom 6:2) is explained in Rom 7:6:*"But now we have been delivered from the [power of the] law, having died to what we were held by [the threat of eternal damnation], so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:6) As Paul says: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."* (Gal 2:19 KJV) The concept that we have 'died with Christ' is not too hard to understand. We all have sinned and brought on ourselves the penalty of eternal death—we were slaves to our sinful nature. Before conversion, we were like a convicted criminal on 'death's row,' waiting for the noose. Then (figuratively), a lawyer comes to our prison cell and tells us, in utter amazement, that a totally innocent 'Man' is willing to take our place and die for our crimes—if we accept his sacrifice. If we accept, we are free to go! The analogy seems clear: The debt of the law has been paid. We have been 'delivered' from the law. Our 'death' at baptism kills the 'old man' of sin. And Paul tells us: *"For he who has died has been freed from sin."* (Rom 6:7 NKJV) Or, as the NLT has it: *"For when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin."* The 'power' of sin is its consequences —eternal death. We are 'set free from'/'no longer held by 'the threat of eternal death because we 'died' with Christ at baptism. Is this freedom only good until we sin again?

"Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined Him in His death?" (Rom 6:3 NLT) *"And all who have been united with Christ*

in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes." (Gal 3:27 NLT) "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism," (Eph 4:5 NLT) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."

(Heb 2:9 NKJV) All mankind can physically die twice. The first time, 'death' is only sleeping—as Christ Himself tells us. (Act 13:36; 1Co 15:6; 1Co 15:18) The second death, however, is permanent and only the incorrigible wicked who have rejected God, will receive this punishment—in the lake of fire! (Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8)

As long as we have God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us, aren't we free from the danger of the second death—even though we still sin? When we die with Christ, don't we also die to sin once for all time? Otherwise wouldn't we need to be baptized over and over? Wouldn't Christ need to be sacrificed again and again? "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."* (Gal 2:21 KJV)

Peter corroborates: *"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness..."* (1Pe 2:24 KJV)

11. Called 'Saints' *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"* (1Co 1:2 KJV)

Strong's defines 'Saint' (hagios) as: sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), saint.

"Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ... And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."

(Act 9:13, 32 KJV) *"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."* (Rom 1:7 KJV)

Saints and sinners are absolute opposites! So how could we be considered 'saints'—Righteous, Holy, blameless, and above reproach (Col 1:22)—if we are also considered 'sinners'? And the Prophet, Habakuk, tells us that God cannot look on sin: *"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness."* (Hab 1:13 NKJV) God would be turning His back on us often if our

sins were put on our account; if we were being condemned again and again as sinners.

“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom 5:19)

12. Children & Heirs of God *“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God...”* (Rom 8:16 KJV) The word, ‘are’ in the above passage is a Present Indicative verb. That means it is something occurring NOW. As it also says in I John 3:2: *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* (1Jhn 3:2NKJV) *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”*(Rom 8:16-17) *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”* (1Pe 1:3-4 KJV) *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*(1Pe 1:22-23 KJV) Having God’s own Spirit in us means we are FAR MORE ALIVE now than we were at conception. Actually, at our conception we began the process of dying. Without God and His gift of eternal life, all people would die forever. We are not God’s Spirit-born children yet, of course, but—like an egg begotten in a mother’s womb—we are no longer dead (spiritually), but alive with the ‘sperm’ of eternal life dwelling in us. And, just as a mother calls a fetus in the womb, her ‘child’, so God calls us His children NOW! However, unlike a human birth that can abort naturally, the Spiritual embryo in us—the Holy Spirit—means guaranteed birth in God’s family (as long as we stay in the ‘womb’ of God and the Church (our ‘mother) and don’t abort ourselves by neglect or rejection—see “The Unpardonable Sin” below). After all, if our sins separated us from God, wouldn’t we become ‘unbegotten’ each time we sin? There are so many scriptures about us being God’s children. Here are just a few: Mat 5:9; Luk 20:36; John 11:52; Rom 8:16; Rom 8:2; Rom 9:8; Gal 3:26; 1John 3:10; 1John 5:2

And, since we are God's very Children, we are to inherit ALL things! *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* (Gal 3:29 KJV)

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit 3:7 KJV) *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him?"* (Jas 2:5 KJV)

13. We are Dead with Christ & Risen with Christ *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."* (Rom 6:4-13 NKJV) *"...and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* (2 Co 5:15, 17 NKJV) *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."* (Gal 6:15 NKJV) *"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."* (Rom 8:3-4, 6-10 KJV) *"Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."* (Col 2:12 NKJV) Our 'old man' has been 'crucified with Christ,' dead and buried with Him. Our death in Him is accepted by God as the fulfillment of the law. And Paul says, *"He that is dead is freed from sin"* (Rom 6:6) Can a dead man be condemned? And is the 'old man' resurrected each time we sin? Wouldn't it need to be crucified with Christ again, if so? Those 'in' Christ are free from all the consequences of their past sins because those sins have been forgiven them on the cross and all future sins are not even imputed! —God's grace in action! Paul equates the Spiritual life within us as the very same Spiritual

life that raised Christ from the dead! *"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* (Rom 8:11 KJV) *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God."* (Col 3:1 NKJV) We aren't left 'dead' when we are 'crucified with Christ'! We are raised with Christ as a NEW CREATION! And Christ then lives His life in us, which is the new Spiritual Creation created within us. Christ in us IS the New Creation.

"Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So, they slander you. But remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. That is why the Good News [the Gospel] was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now [will] live forever with God in the Spirit." (1Pe 4:6 NLT) "Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So, God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of His grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all He has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:1, 4-7) Paul tells us we cannot please God if we are 'in the flesh'. Yet he also tells us—in the same verse—that we Christians are not in the flesh! How can that be? We still need to eat and drink and sleep in order to survive...we seem to be very much 'flesh' still! *?? "...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."* [Rom 8:7-10 NKJV] *"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of*

your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses," (Col 2:11-13 NKJV) "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col 3:1-4 KJV) "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal 3:3 KJV) "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal 5:25 KJV) The Holy Spirit in us is the living proof that we are: 1) alive with Christ; 2) that our sinful self is dead; 3) that our 'old man' of sin is 'cut off' through the 'circumcision' of Christ; 4) that Christ is now our life; 5) that we are a New Creation in Him; 6) that we are 'in' the Spirit and will be changed to Spirit when Christ returns; 7) that we are NOW the children of God.

14. *Bride of Christ "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God." (Rom 7:4 NKJV) Because we died to sin when we were baptized into Christ's death, we are free from our 'marriage' to sin, to become the Bride-to-be of our future sinless Husband—Christ!*

Christ would certainly not contemplate marriage with a sinner or a dead bride! The command to 'not be unequally yoked' (2 Cor 6:14) applies to Christ's marriage as well as our own! His bride MUST be as pure as He is! "For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ." (2 Cor 11:2 NLT) "Blessed are they that are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." (Rev 19:9) "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless...After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of His Body." (Eph 5:25-30 NIV)

15. *Christ Lives in us/We are the Body of Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,*

who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20 NKJV) "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:27 NKJV) "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3:3 NKJV)

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified." (2Co 13:5 NKJV) "But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:10) "Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." (2Co 4:10-11 NKJV)

*"But when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me." (Galatians 1:15-16)
"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you," (Gal 4:19 NKJV) "...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love..." (Eph 3:16-17 NKJV) "My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. ... I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ... I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them." (Jhn 17:9, 23, 26 NLT) "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." (1Co 12:27 NKJV)*

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

We were not 'set free' from sinning but 'set free' from the eternal consequences of sin "In deep gratitude our response to God is to become "slaves of righteousness"—totally committed and dedicated to our new Master and totally rejecting our old master of sin and death. Thus, being under grace does not mean out from under obligation to obey God's law. Being under grace means out from under the penalty of the law for breaking it so that we may be empowered with

new life to live in obedience to it in following Jesus Christ as Ruler of our lives!
“Paul summarizes the point of this discussion in the last verse of the chapter,
Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord.” “Gift” here translates the Greek word *charisma*, closely
related to the word *charis*, meaning “grace.” And *charisma* means “gift”—the gift
in this case being “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”—the ultimate gift of God’s
grace