

Baptism of Our Lord

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 43:1-7

Israel's Only Savior

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. 3 For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. 4 Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. 5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. 6 I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, 7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Lutheran Hour Devotion

43:1-2 Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Isaiah 43:1b-2

Linton, North Dakota, has had its share of problems. Yes, I know you and your community have problems too. But Linton has had *problems*.

First, one of the town's largest employers closed. That was rough. Then two tributaries from the Missouri River flooded, washing out bridges and roads, damaging more than 70 homes in a community of 1,500. That was devastating. But now, with the sandbags gone, Linton is coming back.

The fields are plowed and the pastures are green. Businesses have moved from the outskirts of town back to Main Street. For the first time in three decades, all the Main Street buildings are filled and downtown traffic is a reality.

But there's more. The spring floods have filled the community's lake, and boats can once again be launched. Anglers and vacationers are starting to return.

Linton has experienced quite a transformation. The co-publisher of the town's weekly newspaper calls it, "revitalization through devastation." I like that. I like it because it's so theologically sound. Think about it. We Christians, once condemned sinners, have been revitalized through the devastation experienced by Jesus on the cross. We who have seen the Lord's love and commitment through the Savior's dedicated life, His unfair death, and His glorious resurrection have been forgiven, saved, recycled, and restored.

As Isaiah said, by the Savior's sacrifice we have been redeemed. Now, living in God's love, we

know rivers cannot devastate us; we believe we cannot be overwhelmed.

In truth, in troubling times, whatever difficulties and destructions that sweep down upon us, we Christians can remain confident: God has called us by name; we are His.

43:1 *but now* – At the end of the exile. (TLSB)

The chapter begins with an unexpected thought. The last verse of the previous chapter announced God's burning wrath upon His people. They did not obey His law; they were blind and deaf to all that God had done for them. Because of their sins, God had sent the violence of war upon them. But they remained blind and deaf. We might have expected that Isaiah would continue with a fierce announcement of judgment. In spite of all God did for His people, they deserved God's judgment. God would have been justified in abandoning such ungrateful and stubborn people to their own sins. The phrase "But now," however, introduces something unexpected. We read tender words of faithful love from the Lord, the God of free and faithful grace. (PBC)

thus says the Lord – All of these words are very intense. "Do not be afraid, you seed of Jacob, because I have created you. You are My creature." This is the antithesis to the enemies who cry that the godly and the apostles are rebels and creatures of Satan. So they shake us as through a sieve and heap curses on us. But here God says, "Don't be afraid. I affirm that I am your Creator." The apostles are creatures made by God and created a new people. Of this creation He is speaking here. "I am He, I am the same God who created everything." When they hear about a new creation, people must not think of a new God. "I acknowledge you as My creature. Let the enemies say the opposite. It does no harm." (Luther)

created ... formed. God made the nation Israel as surely as he made the first man (see Ge 1:27; see also Isa 43:7, 15, 21; 44:2, 24). (CSB)

IN the last chapter we heard the comfort of the church. This comfort keeps busy the affairs and schemes of the devil, who tries to disturb this consolation and righteousness. Hence this chapter offers similar consolation to raise up the church, as if she were already desperate and fallen. You see that the church is forever about to fall, and therefore there must always be consolations. Although there would scarcely be a remnant, God is the protector of this poor little church. Paul especially used this argument against the Jews, calling himself (Phil. 3:5) "of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin." Paul made use of such and similar boasts to strengthen his church, even though it was always the most wretched in appearance. (Luther)

This smallness of the church is the supreme offense in the world. "Do you think you are the only ones who count?" they say. Here there must be an apostolic faith against this offense. Therefore the prophet consoles the church with these grand words, "Do not be offended." While Christ was hanging on the cross, the church was practically nothing. It began with the malefactor, then came the apostles, etc. This offense hurts not only the simple but also the prophets and apostles, as David says (Ps. 62:9), "Men of low estate are but a breath, men of high estate are a delusion." Don't all the others amount to anything? Thus the whole world cries, "We are greater, we are older, you are recent and few, therefore you cannot possibly be right and we wrong." To this the psalm (Ps. 91:7) replies: "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand." We, however, stand far apart from each other, like trees in an open field, while the ungodly are close together like a dense forest. We are a bucket, a little handful, yet that weak smallness is made certain by divine promises. Thus in the time of Elijah there remained 7,000. Where 100 got to heaven, 100,000 were lost. This offense, I say, has tormented all the most holy prophets. (Luther)

Fear not. The Lord says “Fear not, sinner. Fear not my people. Instead of punishment and judgment I will give you deliverance. The unexpected announcement to set aside fear comes for three reasons; all three of them trace the comfort back to the Lord Himself. First, the Lord says, “I have redeemed you.” Second, God called His people by name. He singled them out from all the nations of the earth and called them. Third, these people were God’s own possession. He claimed them: “You are mine.” (PBC)

When we read these words thousands of years later, we too find comfort in them. The Lord has redeemed us too but from that greater bondage. By our sins, we were slaves of sin and in bondage to death and punishment. The Lord redeemed us from sin, death and hell. He bought us with the price of the blood of Christ on Calvary. God called us by name when He washed us in the water of Baptism. All believers belong to the Lord; they are His possession. (PBC)

redeemed you. “I am your Redeemer.” These are burning words. “I have created you in opposition to the people who are not in the church. I have formed and fashioned you by the Holy Spirit. Beyond that, I have redeemed you from tyrants, from the Law, from sin and death. All these I have overcome, they are all under My feet and cannot harm you.” This requires a strong faith. If we only believed this and put down our idol. (Luther)

The principle of redemption has been applied to more than just Judah’s release from Babylon. Redemption has come to be a familiar term to all Christians. We regularly confess that God has redeemed us. He paid the ransom necessary to secure our release from our spiritual bondage to sin, death, and judgment. The redemption did not come cheaply. God paid a dear price when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, in exchange for sinful humanity. The apostle Peter wrote, “You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Luther paraphrased Peter in his explanation of the Second Article in the Small Catechism, “ Jesus Christ... has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.” (PBC)

called you by name. God chose Israel to serve him in a special way. See 45:3–4 (Cyrus). In Ex 31:2; 35:30 the Hebrew underlying this expression is translated “chosen.” (CSB)

In biblical times a name often expressed something about the person named (Gn. 17:20; Is. 40:26). Naming someone expressed ownership or relationship. A name equaled one’s reputation. (Lutheran Bible Companion Volume 2)

John 10:3: “He calls His own sheep by name.” He wants to distinguish and separate the church from the synagogue, for a name distinguishes one from another. “You now have a name that has been written in the heavens.” *I have called*, namely, through the Word. (Luther)

The Lord reminds His people that He has not forgotten His covenant promises to them. Cf Gen 32:26-29. (TLSB)

you are mine – There you see that we are called to be His possession. Whatever, therefore, you do, you should do well, for these [works] are His. “All of your works are Mine.” Note these words, “I have created, I have formed, I have redeemed, you are Mine.” “When you baptize, teach, train, etc., whatever you do and experience, believe that I have done and experienced it.”

So you see that all the activities and experiences of the church are those of God. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 9:4). (Luther)

Certainly our God is the God who brought all things into being by His powerful word, who upholds and sustains all creatures great and small. Yet in this Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 43 God uses 2nd person word forms 25 times. Over and over we hear “you, you you...!” “You are precious in my eyes.” (Herb Schumm – 2/25/15 ///Reed Lessing)

43:2 *waters ... rivers.* Probably an allusion to crossing the Red Sea (Ex 14:21–22) and the Jordan River (Jos 3:14–17). Cf. Ps 66:6, 12. (CSB)

walk through the fire. Fulfilled literally in the experience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Da 3:25–27). Contrast 42:25. (CSB)

A pure piling up of words, as is the Hebrew custom. Waters, rivers, fire, flame shall not harm you, as if to say, “Before you cry and speak, I know what you need. Even though you might be in extreme trouble, nothing shall harm you, and you shall be inwardly safe. Do not become frightened. It is the form of the church to be in water, in rivers, in the fire. But I will be with you, so that nothing will harm you.” (Luther)

In the Sacred Scriptures water and fire denote trials. They went “through fire and water” (Ps. 66:12) and many other places. All of these things signify the trial and trouble of the godly. It is as if He were saying: “There is no one who is not after you. Thus you are in water and fire, etc. But do not be afraid, you are My creature, and for that reason, on My account, the world does not put up with you. Yet nothing can harm you.” This is the church of God, built on a solid rock, the rock of God’s promise. No tyrant can uproot it. Because the godly are in the church, therefore they will remain, even though the tyrants are raging. With their plans and schemes they try hard enough. They want to burn them, choke them, put them under, and banish them, but this passage and promise controls their planning and attempt. Thus God protects His own in the midst of ungodly men and preserves His church. We shall have the same experience. We have been called and chosen into the church by God, but we shall pass through waters and fires. There will be offense, but we shall be preserved. These are the promises given to the church. None of these trials shall do you harm. (Luther)

Armed with God’s promises, God’s ancient people faced the trouble of life. The Lord does not promise that His own faithful believers would escape all difficulty and pass through life without trouble. They would “pass through the waters” and “walk through the fire.” When the people of Israel left Egypt, they did indeed pass through the waters. By God’s power, Moses made a way through the Red Sea. That deliverance stood in the background of these promises. Just as the Lord provided such deliverance in the past, He would provide an even greater deliverance in the future. God assures His people that even their great trials will somehow work out for the best (Romans 8:28). (PBC)

43:3 *I am the Lord your God* – “For that reason you will be preserved, not because you are strong and righteous. No, but rather because I am the Lord.” (Luther)

Holy One of Israel. See notes on 1:4; 41:14. (CSB)

He, I say, God, whom you ignorantly worship, is the head of the church. So Peter in Acts preached in an outstanding way concerning Christ as the head of the church. If we keep this pure,

nothing will harm you, if we can say that the Holy One of Israel is the head of the church against all claims to the contrary. (Luther)

Savior. Who delivers from the oppression of Egypt or Babylon and from the spiritual oppression of sin. The name “Isaiah” means “The LORD saves.” (CSB)

ransom. † The Persians conquered Egypt, Cush and Seba, described by the Lord of nations as a reward or ransom for liberating Israel (see note on 41:2; cf. Eze 29:19–20). (CSB)

This is a dark text. I would prefer to construe it to be a repetition of the preceding. This is what the prophets usually do when they want to say that God is powerful, so as to support the power of this God from what had gone before. This is the meaning: “I am the God who of old protected you against all your enemies, first the Egyptians, then the Ethiopians, then Seba, whose people are also Ethiopians. I have put them all down.” It is as if He were saying: “Don’t you remember how I protected you and put them in your place? Where you should have perished, I caused others to perish in your place. You indeed deserved to perish, as in Egypt when you murmured against Me. Thus you were set free, and others were killed. Thus the Midianites, Ammonites, and others wanted to fight against you, but they perished. You were as a sheep for the slaughter before them. They prepared an atonement and victims for you and thought they were doing God a service by killing you. This plan and work those who plotted it had to experience themselves, while you were preserved.” (Luther)

God restructured the whole ancient world for the sake of a small people apparently sinking into oblivion in a foreign land. Israel’s liberation is described as if God paid the Persians for giving the exiles freedom by giving the Persians Egypt. (TLSB)

Seba. A land near Cush (cf. 45:14) or Sheba (Ps 72:10). It was probably either in south Arabia or across the Red Sea in Africa. (CSB)

Cush and Seba are poetic, expansive expressions for Egypt. (TLSB)

43:4 *because you are precious* – Who says that? “The world does not say this. No, to the contrary, even in your own eyes you seem cast off. But in My eyes you are a noble jewel and emerald. Although in supreme trials you seem nothing in your own eyes and are condemned as one cast off by the world, in My eyes you are glorious. Therefore you may be vile in your own eyes, in the eyes of the world, and even in those of your brothers. Fear not. In My eyes I regard you as a precious jewel.” This consolation applies to those already despairing and almost completely oppressed, so that they may lift themselves up by means of it. “Therefore you are also glorified, namely, because in My eyes you are precious. For that reason you should be glorified, even though you may be the reproach and dung of men. Let the cross go before, glory will triumph in the end. As I have done in the past, so I am still doing now.” It is our glory, therefore, to be worthless in our own eyes and in the view of the world. We must indeed be nothing in our eyes and in those of the whole world. *You are precious in My eyes.* “Because you are nothing to yourself, you are glorious to Me.” (Luther)

I love you – The opposite seems to be true, “I do not love you.” When conscience hears God threaten, it says, “You are God’s foe and enemy.” So the whole world gives expression to the opposite view. Yes, the enemies themselves are the objects of God’s love, not we. Under this cross the flesh cannot believe that it is loved by God. The flesh says, “Love someone else also.” But here the prophet says, “Do not judge yourself according to your feeling but according to the Word, because I love you by hating you.” So you will be protected in supreme dangers. (Luther)

give men in return for you – This, too, seems like the opposite. Our side seems to be going under, while the enemies are on top. We are dying daily as sheep for the slaughter. All of these words are spoken as in darkness, and they are like words “in a dark place” (cf. 2 Peter 1:19), when I see the enemies victorious and myself imprisoned. “As for you, have confidence, when all men boast that they are the church of God, the sons of God, but you are condemned as a heretic, in that case cling to Me, because you are clear to Me and splendid in My eyes. It is necessary for Me to speak to you because you are in difficulties, but they are most glorious.” For that reason the promises must be spoken to those who are not glorious. (Luther)

In the exodus, Israel was redeemed at the expense of Egypt. Cf Pr. 21:18. (TLSB)

43:5 *fear not*. Why does He say *Fear not*? Because there are fears within and terrors without, the church is a tumult and a frightened people, beset by fear, despair, and sins. For that reason it has the Word, which is the breath of its life, so that it may be consoled by the Word. “Why are you afraid? Don’t be afraid. I am with you.” The opposite appears to be the case: “I am far away from you.” Since the conscience feels that God is very far away from us, it is necessary for Him to say *I am with you*. These are hidden words. It seems that God is against us and with our opponents, because everything is going well for them. However, their end will be a most wretched one, even though their beginning was most favorable. (Luther)

east. Especially Assyria and Babylonia. (CSB)

Now comes the consolation. “You appear worthless, a widow, barren, but you will be fruitful, and, on the contrary, those who are fertile in the eyes of the world will become barren.” So it will happen to us. It is not evident who will afterwards say the words to us, and no womb bears them, but they will come nevertheless. “I know of still other wombs which are full of children, in the east and in the west. If Italy and Germany are unwilling, there will be other areas to bring them forth, because I will bring your offspring from the east and from the west. If the people in Judea are not² willing to do it, Rome and Europe must do it. Therefore, if it is the Word of God, it will be upheld, even if we are unwilling. (Luther)

west. For example, the “islands” of 11:11 (see also 24:14–15; 49:12). (CSB)

43:6 *north*. For example, Hamath. (CSB)

south. Egypt. (CSB)

end of the earth. God’s people will come not only from Babylon but from wherever they have been dispersed throughout the world. On the day of Pentecost, we note such a gathering of Jews from all over the Mediterranean world came to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 2). That day they heard the gospel, and God gathered them into His NT church. But a greater gathering is yet to be. It will occur on the Last day, when God will bring all His people into the heaven He has prepared for them, no matter where they have been scattered. (PBC)

t signifies that this group will be spoken against everywhere. It is as if He were saying: “You are barren, but you will be the most pregnant for Me, because I will order all, even the devil, to send you on your way in peace, whether they like it or not.” It is as if He were saying: “Just calm yourselves, you will not succeed, because I will forbid you.” Thus seeing how the church is despised in its own eyes and in those of the world, this dust, as it were, must press down the mountains and rocks. (Luther)

43:7 *called by my name.* People belonging to God. (CSB)

They are the ones. “You shall not take them from Me or deprive Me of them, though the opposite may seem to be the case. The ones who are the glorious and honorable sons of God, they are the ones who were called by My name.” A Christian man is called by the name of Christ, just as the people of Israel were spoken of as the people of God and were called Israel, because their God is the God of Israel. Thus Christ is our Lord, and we are called by His name. Here every form of one’s own righteousness is rooted out. John, Peter, Augustinian, Franciscan will count for nothing. These are proper nouns. But “Christian” is a common noun which belongs to all believers. “As many as believed and gloried in My name, these are the sons of God. And although they appear to be few, they will nevertheless be numerous from the south and the north. There are fishermen enough to catch them.” (Luther)

created ... formed. A Christian is already one with Christ and already has participation in Him. He is member of the member, and flesh of the flesh, just as a wife shares in the name and property of her husband. So the Christian in his entire being becomes a participant with God. Before, he was a most degraded creature, but now he is altogether glorious, not indeed by virtue of his own works and designs but because Christ has called him by name. So we are altogether Christ’s, since Christ has called us, and all our works are not our own but Christ’s. Therefore we are said to have been created for the glow of Christ. (Luther)

All of these things are said about godly people, who are called and who appear to be heretics before the world. On the contrary, it is said here that they have been created and formed. To create means to make something out of nothing. To form means to fashion a shape. Having been made a Christian, then, he is one who should serve his Creator. Outside of these resources of ours there is nothing. We have not created, formed, and made ourselves, but we have everything from God. (Luther)

EPISTLE
Romans 6:1-11

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

6:1-23 Luther: “In chapter 6 (Paul) takes up the special work of faith, the conflict of the spirit with the flesh for the complete slaying of the sin and lust that remain after we are justified. He

teaches us that we are not by faith so freed from sin that we can be idle, slack, and careless, as though there were no longer any sin in us. Sin is present; but it is no longer reckoned for our condemnation, because of the faith that is struggling against it. Therefore we have enough to do all our life long in taming the body, slaying its lusts, and compelling its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts. Thus we become like the death, and resurrection of Christ, and complete our baptism – which signifies the death of sin and the new life of grace – until we are entirely purified of sin, and even our bodies rise again with Christ and live forever.” (AE 35:375-76) (TLSB)

“All this we can do, he says, because we are under grace and not under law. He himself explains what this means. To be without the law is not the same things as to have no laws and to be able to do what one pleases. Rather we are under the law when, without grace, we occupy ourselves with the works of the law. Then sin certainly rules (us) though the law, for no one loves the law by nature; and that is great sin. Grace, however, makes the law dear to us; then sin is no longer present, and the law is no longer against us but one with us.” (AE 35:375-76) (TLSB)

“This is the true freedom from sin and from the law. He writes about this down to the end of the chapter, saying that it is a freedom only to do good with pleasure and to live well without the compulsion of the law. Therefore this freedom is a spiritual freedom, which does not overthrow the law but presents what the law demands, namely, pleasure (in the law) and love (for it) whereby the law is quieted and no longer drives men or makes demands of them. It is just as if you owed a debt to your overlord and could not pay it. There are two ways in which you could rid yourself of the debt: either he would take nothing from you and would tear up the account, or some good man would pay it for you and give you the means to satisfy the account. It is in this latter way that Christ has made us free from the law. Our freedom is, therefore, no carefree fleshly freedom which is not obligated to do anything, but a freedom that does many works of all kinds, and is free of the demands and obligations of the law.” (AE 35:375-76) (TLSB)

6:1-11 After the doctrinal section in Galatians (chapters 3-4) Paul, in chapter 5, deals with two sins which are the constant danger of every Christian. The first is the temptation to return to the Law as a means of justification before God. The second (verse 13) is the danger of using Christian freedom as license to sin. Jesus warns about this sin in John 5:14 and 8:11. Hebrews 10:26 is also applicable here. Once a person has become a Christian he must ever be on his guard against slipping back into that from which Christ redeemed him. (Buls)

6:1-2 Paul forcefully rejects the notion that we should ignore God’s will and deliberately sin, knowing that He will forgive. That is an abuse of grace. (TLSB)

we – Paul and fellow Christians. (TLSB)

6:1 *what shall we say then..continue to sin...grace may abound?* † This question arose out of what Paul had just said in 5:20: “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” Such a question expresses an antinomian (against law) viewpoint. Apparently some objected to Paul’s teaching of justification through faith alone because they thought it would lead to moral irresponsibility. (CSB)

Franzmann: There is a certain logic in the opening question: 'Since the increase of sin leads to the abounding of grace (5:20), shall we persist in sin in order that grace may abound?' But it is cool, Satanic logic; there is in it the Satanic suggestion that we should exploit God, make His grace

serve our selfish will, use His gifts to support us in our rebellion against God. It is the logic which the Tempter used on Jesus (Matthew 4). (Buls)

The second question in verse 1 is a question which is asked by our sinful flesh: "Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may increase?" Our sinful flesh, our old Adam, is thoroughly wicked and evil. It is our greatest cross. We shall carry it about with us until we die. Christians are constantly being tempted by Satan's logic: "Won't a little sinning make God more gracious to you since grace is greater than sin?" (Buls)

"Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound?" The question arose out of what Paul had said in 5:20, "Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." Luther reminds us that Paul did not say this to excuse sin but to glorify divine grace (Martin Luther, translated by J. Theodore Mueller, *Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976], 99). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The question is not "Shall we continue to do sins?" but "shall we continue to pass our lifetime under the lordship of sin?" Another way to put it, with 5:20 in view, is this: Since Israel was given the Law code at Sinai so that trespass should increase until Good Friday in order that grace might super abound at Calvary, should we Christians continue to operate in daily life under Law in the kingdom of sin in order that – carrying the principle in 5:20 forward – grace might continue to abound more so? The answer is "No!" because the interlude of Sinai Law is over, its purpose having been served as of Good Friday. The reign of grace has now been established in all its super abundant fullness. It cannot "super abound" beyond its super abounding on Good Friday. Now, more behavior under Law in the kingdom of Sin will not produce any more grace – nor is any more needed.

Philip Melancton states, "There is in all men so great an infirmity of nature that when we hear the teaching about gratuitous imputation, we become less fruitful for doing good and carnal security is strengthened.

6:2 *by no means* – Paul's answer to which all true believers must agree. It is variously translated: "Perish the thought! Certainly not! By no means! No, no!" Koine Greek did not use exclamation points. In English, one should be placed here. (Buls)

"By no means!" The previous question is answered with an emphatic "no" and with a clear explanation: we have died to sin. If we are dead to sin, we cannot continue in it. The definite past tense, "we died," points to a particular moment of conversion, Baptism, as we shall soon see. It is important to note that while the Christian is dead to sin, he still struggles against his flesh (Rom 7:14–20). There is both an eschatological reality and present ideal to Paul's teaching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

died to sin. The reference is to an event in the past and is explained in v. 3. (CSB)

In Baptism, God applies Christ's death to us so that we receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. Belonging to Him, we reject the illogical question in verse 1. (TLSB)

And now Paul answers the two questions of verse 1 with another question in verse 2. There is a sense in which all true Christians, like their Lord, are dead, dead with respect to sin. One cannot become a Christian until he dies, dies to sin. How does that happen? Christ frees from sin. Christian life is a state of freedom from sin, its guilt and its power. (Buls)

Arndt: Just as a person who dies is separated from his friends and relatives, so the Christian is separated from sin. (Buls)

Even marriage comes to an end when death takes place. (Buls)

Lenski: The moment a man is dead he ceases to respond to stimuli. (Buls)

Pinch a corpse as hard as you can. It will not respond. Paul is assuming, of course, that his reader believes what he had said in Romans 5:12-21. Bengel reminds us of that when he comments (concerning "we have died to sin") "In baptism and justification." The answer, of course, to the question: "How can we live any longer in it (sin)?" is "We simply cannot." But let's be honest about ourselves. Our flesh is constantly tempting us to change liberty into license. That happens in thousands of ways. The reader of these notes needs no examples of this because he finds so many in his life. But Christian faith fights these temptations. (Buls)

It should be obvious that the verb in this verse is not eschatological but refers now to everyday living. We mention this because in verse 8 a future indicative is also used of everyday living now, not in heaven. (Buls)

BLESSED Augustine says regarding this passage: "With this passage the apostle is giving a complete description of the man who has been placed under grace, where with his mind he is already serving God's law, although with his flesh he is still serving the law of sin." And he continues in his description of these two kinds of servitude of the Law and of sin, saying: "For this man does not obey the desire of sin, no matter how his lusts still continue to trouble him and call him to consent to them, until the time that his body is raised to life and 'death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:54). Thus because we do not surrender to these low desires, we are under grace, and 'sin does not reign in our body' (v. 12). But he over whom sin reigns, no matter how he resists sin, is still under the Law and not under grace." (Luther)

From this quotation the meaning of the apostle's words is clear. For all these propositions: (1) to be dead to sin; (2) but to live unto God; (3) to serve with the mind the law of God and with the flesh the law of sin, mean nothing else than this, that we do not yield to our evil lusts and to sin, even though sin still remains in us. This is the same as saying: (4) Sin does not have dominion, does not rule; but (5) righteousness does rule, etc. Hence later on, in chapter 13:14, he says: "And make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires," as if he were saying: "The desires of the flesh are themselves sin, that is, original sin and the rest of the paternal inheritance from Adam remain, but you must not obey them." Likewise he says, "That the body of sin might be destroyed" (v. 6), which takes place when our spirit resists sin and refuses to give in to it. (Luther)

We are in sin until the end of our life. For this reason blessed Augustine says: "Until our body is raised to life and death is swallowed up in victory, our evil desires will afflict us."² Likewise, we read in Gal. 5:17: "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." And below, in Rom. 7:19 Paul says: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do, etc." Again, in James 4:1: "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members?" And in 1 Peter 2:11: "Abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul." And in this way all the apostles and saints confess that sin and concupiscence remain in us, until the body returns to ashes and a new one is raised up without concupiscence and sin, as 2 Peter 3:13 puts it,

“According to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells,” as if to say that sin dwells in this present world. Just so in Jer. 18:4 ff. in regard to the potter who repairs the broken vase by making another, the Lord says that He will do likewise. For the Lord hates this body of sin and is preparing to remake it into another; therefore He commands us to hate it also, to destroy and put it to death and to seek an escape from it and “the coming of His kingdom” (Matt. 6:10). (Luther)

6:3–4† The when and how of the Christian’s death to sin. Baptism is a means by which we enter into a vital faith relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a means of receiving God’s grace, and it depicts graphically what happens as a result of the Christian’s union with Christ. Through faith we are united with Christ, just as through our natural birth we are united with Adam. As we fell into sin and became subject to death in father Adam, so we now have died and been raised again with Christ—which baptism effects. (CSB)

The power of the new and sanctified life flows forth from our connectedness to Christ in Baptism. In Baptism, we join Christ in his death to sin (justification) and are, as Paul says, buried with him. The imagery here is that of drowning. Immersion has better imagery than our present-day sprinkling and pouring, as Luther writes: “The significance of Baptism [is] that the old man and the sinful . . . flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God” (WLS § 156). Whether one immerses or not, it should be taught and understood that nothing of the former life or person remains. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Hina, “in order that,” just as Christ was raised from the dead . . . we, too, should *peri patēsōmen*, “walk,” in a newness of life. Describing the one who is crucified with Christ, Luther writes, “The spiritual person . . . must be totally separated from and dead in his heart to all (*temporal*) things. This he does when with all his spiritual strength he despises what belongs to this earthly life” (Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, p 101). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

6:3 *baptized into Christ Jesus* – Baptism connects us with Christ’s work, clothing us in His righteousness. (TLSB)

were baptized into his death – Christ paid the penalty of our sin. Christ’s work is applied to us in Baptism. (TLSB)

Kretzmann: They should remember what they knew with regard to their Baptism, whose meaning had been explained to them. (Buls)

In keeping with this idea Lenski calls this question a *litotes* for: “But I am sure that you know the fact etc.” Paul is simply reminding the Romans of something which they had learned before they were baptized. Paul had a very diplomatic but firm way of dealing with his hearers. (Buls)

Baptism into Christ Jesus equals baptism into Christ’s death. That is a tremendous thought. How can anyone call baptism a mere symbol? (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Through baptism we partake of Christ and the fruit of His death. The one does not exclude the other. . . . Faith is nothing else than personal contact with Christ. (Buls)

Arndt: When we were baptized we became partakers of the death of Christ. It was just as though we had died ourselves. The apostle here appeals to baptism, because it is the beginning of our Christianity. . . . Christ died to the sin of others which he bore; we die to sin that we have in ourselves and whose yoke we cast off. (Buls)

Bengel: He who is baptized puts on Christ, the second Adam; he is baptized, I say, into the whole Christ, and so also into his death, and it is just as if, at that moment, Christ suffered, died, and were buried for such a man, and as if such a man suffered, died, and was buried with Christ. (Buls)

The Baptism of our Lord himself gives us some clues to this connection between Baptism and death and new life. The Father spoke, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). These words quote from Is. 42:1, the first Suffering Servant Song, and Ps 2:7, which speaks of the enthronement of God's anointed Son as King. Christ was baptized into his role of suffering and death in order to redeem us from sin (cf. the last Suffering Servant Song, Isaiah 53, and Luke 12:50). But his Baptism also was the prelude to his enthronement in glory after his victorious resurrection (Ps. 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 3, Part 3)

Blessed Augustine in Book 4, chapter 3, of *On the Trinity* says: "For our twofold death the Savior pays with His single death, and in order to achieve a twofold resurrection for us, He has set before us and offered us His own single resurrection in His sacrament and example. For having put on our mortal flesh and dying only in it and rising only in it, now only in it He joins these things together for us, for in this flesh He became a sacrament for the inner man and an example for the outward man. With regard to the sacrament for the inner man we have this word: 'We know that our old self was crucified with Him, so that the body of sin might be destroyed' (v. 6). But to the example for the outward man this statement is pertinent: 'And do not fear those who kill the body' (Matt. 10:28). He most strongly encouraged His followers to this course through His own death, which was of this kind." The resurrection of the body of the Lord is shown to pertain to the sacrament of the inner man through this statement of the apostle in Col. 3:1: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above." But to the example for the outward man this statement applies: "Not a hair of your head will perish" (Luke 21:18), along with the fact that He showed His body to His disciples after His resurrection. Thus in this passage the apostle is speaking of the death and resurrection of Christ insofar as they refer to the sacrament, but not to the example. (Luther)

Hence we must note that death is of two kinds: natural, or better, temporal death and eternal death. Temporal death is the separation of the body and the soul. But this death is only a figure, a symbol, and like death painted on a wall when compared with eternal death, which is also spiritual. Hence in the Scripture it is very often called a sleep, a rest, a slumber. Eternal death is also twofold. The one kind is good, very good. It is the death of sin and the death of death, by which the soul is released and separated from sin and the body is separated from corruption and through grace and glory is joined to the living God. This is death in the most proper sense of the word, for in all other forms of death something remains that is mixed with life, but not in this kind of death, where there is the purest life alone, because it is eternal life. For to this kind of death alone belong in an absolute and perfect way the conditions of death, and in this death alone whatever dies perishes totally and into eternal nothingness, and nothing will ever return from this death, because it truly dies an eternal death. This is the way sin dies; and likewise the sinner, when he is justified, because sin will not return again for all eternity, as the apostle says here, "Christ will never die again," etc. (v. 9). This is the principal theme in Scripture. For God has arranged to remove through Christ whatever the devil brought in through Adam. And it was the devil who brought in sin and death. Therefore God brought about the death of death and the sin of sin, the poison of poison, the captivity of captivity. As He says through Hosea (Hos. 13:14): "O Death, I will be your death; O Hell, I will be your bite." This is prefigured in all the wars of the children of Israel in the Old Testament, when they killed the Gentiles. The other kind of death is eternal and very terrible. It is the death of the damned, where sin and the sinner are not the ones to

die, while man is saved, but man dies, while sin lives on and continues forever. This is “the very evil death of the wicked.” And when the apostle speaks of the death of Christ in a sacramental manner, he is speaking of the second spiritual death, and thus the meaning of his words is very plain. (Luther)

I used the term “sin of sin.” What does this mean? The sin of sin is to act against the law of sin and to transgress the law of the members (Rom. 7:23) and to sin against the lusts of the flesh. This kind of sin is very good. Just as the death of death means to act against death, which is the same thing as life, so the sin of sin is righteousness. Hence Ecclesiasticus (Ecclus. 42:14): “Far better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing a good turn,” that is, it is better that the spirit transgress the law of the flesh and act contrary to the flesh than that the flesh act according to its own law. These are the works of the Lord in which He delights and causes us to delight, as it is written: “The Lord shall rejoice in His works” (Ps. 104:31). And later on, in Rom. 8:3, he says: “For sin He condemned sin.” The Spirit uses these negative expressions which are sweeter than the affirmative ones to describe the eternal nature of the things about which He is speaking. Because for death to be killed means that death will not return, and “to take captivity captive” means that captivity will never return, a concept which cannot be expressed through an affirmative assertion. For a person can think of life without eternity. Thus it also says in the same psalm: “Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belongs escape from death” (Ps. 68:20), rather than the entrance of life. For the entering into life can, and necessarily must, become a departure from life, but the “escape from death” means to enter into a life which is without death. These are “the delights of Christ” of which it says in Ps. 16:3: “As for the saints in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight,” and in Ps. 111:2, “Great are the works of the Lord, sought out according to all His desires.” (Luther)

6:4 *buried with him through baptism into death.* Amplified in vv. 5–7. (CSB)

As Jesus was covered by the earth in His burial, we are buried in baptismal water. Early Christian baptismal practices reflected the Jewish *tebilah* rite of purification, which was by immersion. However, there were other ways to wash or baptize. (TLSB)

In the spiritual man all things ought to appear to men and to himself in the same way that Christ appeared to the Jews in death and burial. For He is our Precentor that we may address our responses to Him in all things. (Luther)

First, when Christ had died He no longer felt any of those things which happen in the outside world, even though He was still in that world. Thus the spiritual man, although he is present in all things with his senses, yet in his heart he is entirely withdrawn from these things and dead to all of them. This comes about when a man comes to hate all the things of this life from the very marrow of his bones, indeed, when he detests all the things which go on in this life and yet endures them with patience and even with joy and glories in the fact that he is like a dead body and “the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things” (1 Cor. 4:13), as the apostle puts it. But we must note that it is not necessary for all men to be found immediately in this state of perfection, as soon as they have been baptized into a death of this kind. For they are baptized “into death,” that is, toward death, which is to say, they have begun to live in such a way that they are pursuing this kind of death and reach out toward this their goal. For although they are baptized unto eternal life and the kingdom of heaven, yet they do not all at once possess this goal fully, but they have begun to act in such a way that they may attain to it—for Baptism was established to direct us toward death and through this death to life—therefore it is necessary that we come to it in the order which has been prescribed. (Luther)

There are thus three kinds of people in this order. First there are those who are impatient with a cross and a dying of this kind, and they are unwilling to die. These people are like the robber on the left, for they blaspheme Christ, at least in their heart and also in their work. The second class, however, are those who endure it, but with great feeling, difficulty, and groaning; yet they finally overcome, so that at least they die with patience. It is very hard for them that they are despised and detested by all. They are like the robber on the right, indeed, a grieving and sympathetic Christ carried them in His body. But the third class are those who, as I have said, enter upon this death with joy, whom Christ Himself prefigured when He died with a loud shout like the most courageous giant. (Luther)

Luther in his large catechism says: “Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death. Oh, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone’s door such a treasure and medicine that is utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive.” (TLSB)

just as Christ was raised – We are united to Christ’s death and burial so that we will be united to His resurrection and life. (TLSB)

through the glory of the Father. By the power of God. God’s glory is his divine excellence, his perfection. Any one of his attributes is a manifestation of his excellence. Thus his power is a manifestation of his glory, as is his righteousness (see 3:23). Glory and power are often closely related in the Bible (see Ps 145:11; Col 1:11; 1Pe 4:11; Rev 1:6; 4:11; 5:12–13; 7:12; 19:1). (CSB)

God’s power was gloriously reveal in the resurrection. (TLSB)

walk in newness of life. Amplified in vv. 8–10. (CSB)

Christ’s work gives us a new life, free from the guilt of sin. Luther: “Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death or, even though they died, could restore them quickly to life so they would afterward live forever. Oh, how the world would pour in money life snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone’s door such a treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive” (LC IV 43). (TLSB)

In all three Synoptists, whenever Christ predicted His death, He also predicted His resurrection. For example, Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19. Note how closely death and resurrection are bound to each other in Romans 4:25. And here, in Romans 6:4, Paul draws a conclusion about what happens to the Christian in baptism. Through baptism he is buried with Christ (Christ literally, the Christian spiritually). Burial proves that death has taken place. Why? Note the correlative. Just as Christ was raised (by the Father) from the dead (literally) through the glory (glorious power) of the Father, likewise also we (who have been baptized) walk in newness of life. (Buls)

Rienecker: In a new state, which is life. (Buls)

Bengel: This newness consists in life. (Buls)

That comes close to genitive of content. This newness of life takes place now, immediately after the person comes to faith or is baptized, whichever comes first. Furthermore, if baptism gives us newness of life, prior to that we had oldness of death. (Buls)

Franzmann: Paul's first concern here, however, is not our future resurrection; he is intent on bringing home to us that fact that through our baptism we share in Christ's resurrection now. . . . The new life, the life of the world to come is a present reality, present and at work in the Word and sacrament of the Gospel. (Buls)

Kretzmann: In Baptism the believer dies with Christ, in a spiritual sense. He passes through a death, dies unto sin, is really, totally, dead unto sin. (Buls)

Lenski: Life itself, both physical and spiritual, is invisible, intangible, but it shows its presence by a thousand activities, all of which are absent in death. (Buls)

"To walk" is a Scriptural metaphor for living. (Buls)

It should say "so also we were raised" to become kings with Him (cf. 5:18, where, however, the thought is also carefully expressed in a future tense verb). But instead, the completing verb is "we should walk," a subjunctive form which refers to the Christian journey through a span of life stretching from his baptism to his death (or Christ's return). He should traverse that pilgrimage "in newness of life," under the reality of that life which is the gift of the new (eschatological) aeon in Christ. Thus the phrase refers to a gift and an outlook, one has while journeying (cf. 6:11), not primarily to "behaving in a new and better way," or "being morally improved." The outlook, of course does influence behavior.

6:5-7 Paul expounds on what he has previously set forth in vv 3-4. Baptism is not, as Luther reminds us, a simple washing with water only. Baptism is connected to God's Word and at his command. In the same way that the Word of God brought forth light in a world dark and void (Gen 1:1-5), God's Word brings forth life where we are otherwise dead in sin (Eph 2:1-4). In Baptism, God's people are united with Christ in his death (by drowning) and in his resurrection. Here, the old self is crucified with Christ *hina*, so that, the body of sin might be done away with and that we would no longer be *douleuein*, slaves, to sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

6:5 *united with him in a resurrection* –Christ identifies Himself with us; His death pays for our sins, and His righteousness is credited to us. His death was on the cross; ours is in Baptism, which gives the benefits the benefits of His work on the cross. (TLSB)

The commentators point out that verses 3-5 have a theme in common: buried with Christ through baptism. But the thought grows from verse 3 is limited to baptism into death. Verse 4 adds the promise that we shall walk in newness of life. And verse 5 states that those who have experienced a death like that of Christ will experience a resurrection like that of Christ. Therefore, from verse 3 to verse 5 we traverse the whole territory from conversion to everlasting life. (Buls)

"Planted together" here denotes very close association. The RSV translates the whole verse thus: "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." That says it very well. My death and resurrection are not the same as Christ's. God made Him to be sin in my stead. He bore my sin and all others. He is the Savior.

But, His death cut me off from the guilt and power of sin. He was the first to rise from the dead. Because of His resurrection I will rise. The point is that in all respects He is my benefactor. He cut me off from sin, He gives me newness of life, He will raise my body on the last day. (Buls)

Bengel: All spiritual quickening power is in Christ, and that power centers in baptism. (Buls)

resurrection like his – New life has already begun for the child of God; at Christ’s return, our bodies will be raised to life again. (TLSB)

6:6 *our old self*. Our unregenerate self; what we once were. (CSB)

The term “old man” describes what kind of person is born of Adam, not according to his nature but according to the defect of his nature. For his nature is good, but the defect is evil. However, the term “old man” is used not only because he performs the works of the flesh but more especially when he acts righteously and practices wisdom and exercises himself in all spiritual good works, even to the point of loving and worshiping God Himself. The reason for this is that in all these things he “enjoys” the gifts of God and “uses” God. Nor can he be freed of his perversity (which in the Scriptures is called curviness, iniquity, and crookedness) except by the grace of God. Eccl. 1:15: “The perverse are hard to be corrected.” This is said not only because of the stubbornness of perverse people but particularly because of the extremely deep infection of this inherited weakness and original poison, by which a man seeks his own advantage even in God Himself because of his love of concupiscence. Ps. 72:14: “From usuries and iniquities He redeems their life.” Furthermore, this iniquity is so bottomless that no one can ever understand its depth, and in Scripture, by the grace of God, not the iniquity itself but only the love of it is rebuked. Ps. 11:5: “His soul hates him that loves iniquity.” And Ps. 32:6: “Therefore,” that is, because of iniquity, “let everyone who is godly offer prayer to Thee,” because He hates iniquity. This is symbolized in the curviness of that woman in the Gospel whom Satan had held captive for 18 years, as the Savior said (Luke 13:11). (Luther)

body of sin. The self in its pre-Christian state, dominated by sin. This is a figurative expression in which the old self is personified. It is a “body” that can be put to death. For the believer, this old self has been “rendered powerless” so that it can no longer enslave us to sin—whatever lingering vitality it may yet exert in its death throes. (CSB)

Therefore the term “body of sin” ought not be understood as something mystical, as many people do who imagine that “body of sin” refers to a whole mountain of evil works, but rather it refers to this very body which we are carrying around. It is called the “body of sin” because it inclines against the spirit and toward sin. And the seed of the devil dwells in it; hence the Lord in Gen. 3:15 says: “I will put enmity between your seed and her seed.” The seed of the woman is the Word of God in the church, because it inclines toward righteousness and good works. The seed of the devil is sin itself, the tinder and evil lust in our flesh. And this enmity is active all the time, as the apostle says in Gal. 5:17: “The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.” The flesh has the seed of the devil in it and is seeking to bring forth sin and bear sinful fruit. But the Spirit possesses the seed of God and seeks to bring forth righteousness and the fruits of righteousness. And thus these two “are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would” (Gal. 5:17). (Luther)

brought to nothing – Paul does not pronounce the old man dead or the body of sin (sinful self) destroyed. They are nailed to the cross and rendered powerless, but yet crying out to be released and have their way. The fact that crucifixion was a slow death – taking hours or even

day – fits in with this image of the old man nailed to the cross but not yet having died, as the Christian continues to pass a lifetime in the overlapping aeons.

Note that a new sentence began at verse 5. The punctuation at the end of verse 5 is a semicolon. Verse 6, which cannot stand alone, is subordinate to verse 5. Lenski thinks that "for we know" denotes cause: "since we realize that etc." Arndt rightly remarks: "Christians are aware of it." (Buls)

What is our "old man?" It is the same as the flesh. It is not an essential part of human nature for, if that were so, Christ would have been born a sinner. But since the fall of man, all who are born in the ordinary manner are spiritually blind, dead and enemies of God. It speaks of women as well as of men. What has happened to it? It has been crucified with Christ. What has been crucified has died. My old sinful nature has been killed. (Buls)

Lenski: Our old man was literally murdered in our Baptism, he did not die willingly, but was slain as one cursed of God. . . . 'old man' denotes our entire being as it existed before regeneration, 'old' pointing back to that former existence. (Buls)

Why was our old man slain? In order that our sinful body might be made inactive, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: It is called the body of sin, the sinful body, not as though the body were the essential seat or source of sin but its organ and tool. Sin or the old Adam endeavors to perform the evil lusts through the medium of the body and its members and does perform them in natural man. In baptized Christians, on the other hand, the body of sin is put out of commission. . . . It is God's will that we no longer serve sin. (Buls)

The body is not sinful of itself but sin constantly wants to use it for sinful purposes. (Buls)

Franzmann: This manner of speaking about the body is strange to us. . . . The 'sinful body' is, then, the body as expressive of our old self and its will. . . . This body has been put out of action. (Buls)

The term "to destroy" is understood in a spiritual sense in this context. For if he were intending to speak of a destruction of the body, it would not be necessary that the "old man" be crucified for this. Because he actually will be destroyed anyway, whether we wish it or not, even in the case of those people whose old man is not crucified. Thus what is necessary cannot be command or counsel. Hence, also according to blessed Augustine, the apostle in explaining this destruction goes on to say, "That we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (v. 6). This is an interpretation (says blessed Augustine) of the expression "that the body of sin might be destroyed."¹³ Thus to destroy the body of sin is to break the lusts of the flesh and of the old man by works of penitence and the cross and thus to diminish them day by day and to put them to death, as Col. 3:5 tells us: "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you." In fact, in this same passage he most clearly describes both the new and the old man. (Luther)

enslaved to sin – Once again, the focus is primarily on the realm in which and the lordship under which one is living, not on how one is behaving.

Completely controlled by the sinful nature. "The Law of the Lord is also necessary so that the old Adam...may not use his own will, but may be subdued against his will" (FC Ep VI 4). (TL SB)

6:7 *has died.* The believer's death with Christ to sin's ruling power. (CSB)

free from sin. Set free from its shackles and power. (CSB)

Those crucified with Christ in Baptism have been freed from sin's effects. (TLSB)

At the end of verse 6 we have another semicolon but only to introduce an independent clause, it is again explanatory. "You see, the one who has died and has been freed from sin." This verse refers both to Christ and to us, but in different ways. Christ bore the sins of the world. God made Him to be sin in our stead. He took the curse of the Law upon Himself. The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. But when He said "It is finished" and died, Christ had no more to do with sin. Ever since He was revived He had nothing to do with bearing sin or atoning for it. We, through baptism, have died to sin. We receive the fruits of Christ's death. But it can be said of both Christ and us: "The one who died has been freed from sin." (Buls)

Rienecker: 'To be declared to be free from sin' or 'to be acquitted from sin.'

Arndt: 'Justified,' that is, released from sin. . . . If we died with respect to it then it has no authority over us any longer. (Buls)

Bengel: As respects the past, he is justified from guilt; as respects the future, from its dominion, verse 14:1. (Buls)

Kretzmann: As Paul declares in the next sentence (verse 7), in the form of a general axiom, he that is dead is free from sin, is pronounced just and free from sin in every respect, from its dominion as well as its curse, with the emphasis upon the deliverance from its jurisdiction. (Buls)

Note carefully that verse 7 is still speaking about our status in this life. (Buls)

6:8-9 In the same way that resurrection followed the death of Christ, so also resurrection follows the drowning and death of the old man. The believer who dies with Christ to his sin now rises with Christ to a new way of life and living. As death has no power over Christ, neither does it have any power over those who are in Christ (Gal 2:20; Rom 8:37-39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

6:8† As resurrection followed death in the experience of Christ, so the believer who dies with Christ is raised to a new quality of life here and now. Resurrection in the sense of a new birth is already a fact, and it increasingly exerts itself in the believer's life. (CSB)

we will also with him – Here's another one of those fact conditions. It does not generate doubt but conviction for the believer. Jesus died literally. I die to sin because of Jesus, in baptism. All the benefits of His death are mine in baptism. "We believe that we shall also live with Him," not just in heaven but now already. "If any man is in Christ, he is anew creature." (Buls)

Franzmann: The reality of Christ's death and resurrection determines our whole existence. . . . Our present life gets its character, direction, and purpose from the fact that we shall live with Him who lives a life beyond death. (Buls)

That is so true. The people of this world are constantly mourning about their wages, their illnesses, thermo-nuclear war, etc., etc., whereas the Christian firmly believes that he will never die. "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (Buls)

6:9 *death no longer has dominion over him* – Christ lives eternally. He is not subject to death; He conquered it. (TLSB)

A number of translations begin a new sentence here with the words: "For we know that etc." Why do we believe that we shall live with Him? Because we know that Christ, risen from the dead, dies no more, death is not ruler over Him. (Buls)

Lenski: Paul expands Christ's part in this our joint death and subsequent living. Our part depends wholly on his part. . . . The great fact, however, is that after being thus raised up 'Christ dies no more', the emphatic asyndeton restating this from death's side: 'death is no more lord over him. (Buls)

The power and threat of the cruel master, death, is conquered, gone forever. For the believer death is not dying. It means everlasting life! Hallelujah! (Buls)

6:10 *he died to sin once for all*. In his death Christ (for the sake of sinners) submitted to the "reign" of sin (5:21); but his death broke the judicial link between sin and death, and he passed forever from the sphere of sin's "reign." Having been raised from the dead, he now lives forever to glorify God. (CSB)

John Chrysostom: "He was not subject even to (sin), but for our sin, that He might destroy it, and cut away its sinews and all its power, therefore He died" (NPNF1 11:410). (TLSB)

Christ died, once for all. This is the completed action of Jn 19:31, when Christ declared, "It is finished." Now the baptized in Christ are set free to be the people God declares us to be—joyful and having hope; thankful in all circumstances; bearing witness to him; loving our neighbor and even our enemy as ourselves; and certain that this good work he has begun he is daily bringing to completion in the day of Christ Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The meaning is that we must undergo this spiritual death only once. For whoever dies thus lives for all eternity. Therefore we must not return to our sin in order to die to sin again. This interpretation is in opposition to the Novatians, for in regard to the necessity and nature of the spiritual life it is to be laid hold on once, because it is eternal. For death does not put an end to this kind of life against its will, as it does with physical life, but this is the beginning of eternal life. Hence we read in John 11:26: "Whoever believes in Me shall never die," that is, as long as he does not willingly turn away from this spiritual life, he cannot die. This spiritual life will be strengthened in the future in such a way that a person cannot be turned away, for no one would want to be turned away who has been given the complete perfection of an eternal will. (Luther)

For just as the ray of the sun is eternal because the sun is eternal, so the spiritual life is eternal because Christ is eternal; for He is our life, and through faith He flows into us and remains in us by the rays of His grace. Therefore, just as Christ is eternal, so also the grace which flows out of Him is from His eternal nature. Furthermore, just because a man sins again his spiritual life does not die, but he turns his back on this life and dies, while this life remains eternal in Christ. This is what he means when he says: "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (v. 8). How shall we live with Him, "for we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again" (v. 9)? So also: "the death He died He died to sin, once for all" (v. 10). He has Christ, who dies no more; therefore he himself dies no more, but rather he lives with Christ forever. Hence also we are baptized only once, by which we gain the life of Christ, even though we often fall and rise again. For the life of Christ can be recovered again and again, but a person

can enter upon it only once, just as a man who has never been rich can begin to get rich only once, although he can again and again lose and regain his wealth. (Luther)

to God. For the glory of God. (CSB)

Five of our versions similarly translate: "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God." Look at Hebrews 7:27; 9:12,26,28; 10:10. Sin caused His death, but only once. It's over with. Now His life to God goes on and on. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Christ's life was determined and ruled by sin, namely, by the alien sin of men, which he took upon Himself. What He did, experienced, suffering in the days of His flesh, served to atone for and to destroy men's sin. This purpose was realized when He died. Sin atoned once and for all. (Buls)

Nothing lives to God, however, except that which lives eternally and spiritually, because God is eternal and a spirit, before whom nothing counts except what is spiritual and eternal; but the flesh and temporal things are nothing with Him. Therefore since this life is eternal, it is necessary that the man who dies to sin should die only once, since only an eternal life can follow this kind of death, and in this life there can be no death, for otherwise it would not be eternal. Nor can a person who died once to sin die to sin again, because eternal righteousness follows this death and this righteousness never sins again. (Luther)

A corollary follows: The Novatian heresy interpreted this text in a false way, as if those who fell had no hope of rising again, because a person must die to sin once and for all. But this expression "once for all" (*semel*) does not determine the number of acts of repentance, but rather it is a commendation of the eternal nature of grace, and it denies the possibility of some other kind of righteousness, so that the meaning is that whoever has been baptized or has repented has already so escaped sin and acquired righteousness that never again for eternity is it necessary to escape sin or to acquire another righteousness. But this single and only righteousness is sufficient forever. This is not the case at all with the righteousness of men, where according to moral philosophy, as soon as one virtue has been acquired, there are still others which must be acquired. But the meaning here is not that if a person should lose what he has once possessed, he cannot acquire it again. For the Scripture opposes this error in Prov. 24:16: "A righteous man falls seven times and rises again." And the Lord said to Peter: "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). Therefore, as I have said, this term "once for all" does not set forth or deny the number of the exchange, but it emphasizes the number of the diversity, or rather the eternal nature of righteousness, which in this life can often be lost and regained without conflicting with its eternal nature. For even blessed Peter after the sending of the Holy Spirit sinned in his dissimulation, for example, in Gal. 2:11 ff., which surely was a mortal sin, because it was contrary to the Gospel and the salvation of the soul, since the apostle Paul expressly says that Peter did not act according to the truth of the Gospel. (Luther)

6:11 *so you also* – "Likewise also you." These words denote the point of comparison. Christians, like Christ, are both dead and living, dead to sin but alive to God. But here we have an addition not found in verse 10. Only because we are united to Christ Jesus by faith can we be sure that we shall remain dead to sin but alive to God. This prepositional phrase assures me that I am a true heir of everything that He did as my Substitute in life and in death. (Buls)

consider yourselves.† The first aspect of the believer's life (for the succeeding aspects. He is dead to sin and alive to God, and through faith he is to live in the light of this truth. (CSB)

Because Christ has united Himself to us, we do not use forgiveness as an excuse to sin (v. 1); instead we joyfully live in service to Him. (TLSB)

Logizesthe, “reckon; consider deeply; ponder; think intently.” As the resurrected in Christ, we are to ponder deeply what Christ’s death and resurrection mean, and what it means to live our lives resurrected with him. Obedience to God is the fruit of faith for those who are connected to Christ, as Jesus says in Jn 15:5: “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

in Christ. The first occurrence in Romans of this phrase, which is found often in Paul’s writings. True believers are “in Christ” because they have died with Christ and have been raised to new life with him. (CSB)

GOSPEL
Luke 3:15-22

15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” 18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison. 21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

3:15 *people were in expectation* – προσδοκῶντος δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ—The first of two genitive absolutes describes one circumstance surrounding John’s words to the people in 3:16–17. Like both Simeon (2:25) and Anna (2:38), the people are waiting expectantly for something to happen in connection with John’s preaching. This alerts the hearer to the heightened messianic expectations brought on by John’s baptism and to recognize their climax when Jesus is baptized. Ὁ λαός as a term for God’s people, (CC p. 146)

John’s resemblance to Elijah (cf 1:17) suggested to some that he might be the Messiah. (TLSB)

all were questioning – διαλογιζομένων πάντων ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν ... ὁ Χριστός—The second genitive absolute is more specific about the reaction of the people to John’s words. The internal debate among the Jews was about whether John was the Christ. His preaching and eschatological washing made such a conclusion probable. (CC p. 146)

This verse, unique to Luke, creates a kind of pregnant literary pause, heightening the suspense. The people “wait expectantly” and “ponder in their hearts” (*dislogizomai* also of Mary in 1:29). Could John perhaps be the Christ they were looking for? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

3:16 *who is mightier...strap of whose sandals...not worthy to untie* – In Ruth 4, when Boaz redeems Ruth, he receives the sandal from the next of kind of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech, who

was not willing to buy her back. The receiving of the sandal by Boaz from the next of kin was a testimony that he had bought her back. Luke tells us that the people were wondering if John “was the Christ” (3:15). John responds that he is not the Christ and says that he is not worthy to untie Jesus’ sandal and receive it as the one worthy of buying back humanity. John may be the “next of kin” from the perspective of the OT, but Jesus is the Redeemer. Curiously, there may be another oblique reference to Jesse (cf. 3:9) in that Boaz and Ruth give birth to Obed, who is the father of Jesse, the father of David (Ruth 4:17). Jesse’s place in the genealogy becomes heightened. (CC p. 154)

baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Fulfilled at Pentecost (Ac 1:5; 2:4, 38). (CSB)

and with fire. Here fire is associated with judgment (v. 17). See also the fire of Pentecost (Ac 2:3) and the fire of testing (1Co 3:13). (CSB)

Thus by Pentecost, Jesus has been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. He has undergone this baptism as the substitute for all. After Pentecost, Christian Baptism is based on Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion. The post-Pentecost baptizing by Jesus’ apostles incorporates people into Christ, his death and life. In this, Christ may be said to be the Baptizer. Those baptized into Christ are baptized with the Spirit and fire with which he was baptized. John’s baptism cleanses with water, but Jesus’ baptism cleanses with the Holy Spirit and fire, alluding to Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan (the Holy Spirit) and his “baptism” on the cross, where God’s fiery wrath is laid upon him (12:49–50). Jesus’ own baptism and atoning death make possible the baptism in the Spirit and tongues of fire at Pentecost. Jesus is the more powerful one, and his baptism in Spirit and fire initiates the people into God’s end-time kingdom. When this post-Pentecost Christian Baptism comes, John’s catechesis ends (cf. Acts 19:1–7), for the road out of the wilderness to Jerusalem has been traveled by Jesus, whose death and resurrection make it possible for all flesh to see the salvation of God (Lk 3:6). (CC p. 155)

That’s what water and fire have in common – they purify. Water cleans the outside, and fire purifies the inside – perfectly pure. When Jesus enters the water, perfect purity has been connected through Baptism. When the Lord enters our lives through Baptism, the perfect purity of grace has entered our lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

3:17 *His winnowing fork.* The chaff represents the unrepentant and the wheat the righteous. Many Jews thought that only pagans would be judged and punished when the Messiah came, but John declared that judgment would come to all who did not repent—including Jews. (CSB)

κατακαύσει πυρί ἀσβέστῳ—The final reference to fire as unquenchable is the most graphic, heightening the eschatological wrath of God upon those who do not greet the Messiah when He comes. (CC p. 147)

Fire suggests wrath and judgment of God, a common expression in the OT. In the Qumran scrolls, God’s eschatological wrath is likened to ...”a consuming fire in all its streams, to destroy every tree, green and dry, from its banks. The enemies of God, will be hurled into everlasting destruction. One sees in this brief account of John’s preaching that he proclaimed both Law and Gospel and that his words, cast in a picturesque form, must have proved gripping. It is clear that he did not preach an easygoing religiousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

3:19 *Herod ... had been reproved...for Herodias.* Herod Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas IV of Arabia, but divorced her to marry his own niece, Herodias, who was already his brother's (Herod Philip's) wife (see Mt 14:3; Mk 6:17). (CSB)

After Herod Antipas divorced his wife and took Herodias (his niece and former wife of his brother Philip), John denounced him. This led to John's imprisonment and eventual execution (cf Mk 6:14–29). (TLSB)

3:20 *locked John up in prison.* According to Josephus, John was imprisoned in Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities*, 18.5.2). This did not occur until sometime after the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see Jn 3:22–24), but Luke mentions it here in order to conclude his section on John's ministry before beginning his account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see also Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14). He later briefly alludes to John's death (9:7-9). (CSB)

προσέθηκεν καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ πᾶσι - Of all Herod's sins, which were many, the arrest, imprisonment and execution of John were the worst. This placed John in the category of prophet rejected to the point of death, just like Jesus. (CC p. 147)

3:21 *baptized.* Though Jesus did not need to receive Baptism in order to be forgiven, he nonetheless submitted to it. (TLSB)

One cannot understand the gospels or the Christian Gospel without first understanding the baptism of Jesus. Jesus now takes humanity's place to receive the wrath of God against sin. The first step in the fulfillment of John's prediction that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and *with fire* (3:16) is attained with Jesus' baptism. From this moment, Jesus stands in solidarity with sinful humanity. He, therefore, stands for us under the wrath of God, wrath that will culminate in his crucifixion for the sins of the world. The placement of this wrath upon Jesus in his baptism is prepared for by John's baptism of repentance to the forgiveness of sins (3:3) and his preaching of the coming wrath of God (3:7–9, 16–17). God's wrath burns the chaff in an unquenchable fire (3:17). Jesus takes his place as a sinner alongside of sinners, even though he has committed no sin. He subjects himself to the fire of divine wrath (cf. 12:49–50). Jesus' ministry is framed by two baptisms: his baptism in water and Spirit begins his journey to his bloody "baptism" on the cross (12:49–50). The presence of the Trinity at Jesus' baptism affirms that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the one chosen to accomplish the messianic task of substitutionary atonement on the cross. (CC)

Christian Baptism is into Christ and continues the pattern of Christ's baptism with water (in the Jordan), with the Spirit, and with fire (his bloody "baptism" on the cross). Thus it is connected with "the total redemptive action which the baptism of Jesus set in motion." Christian Baptism, like Christ's own baptism, is trinitarian. It effects union with Christ and gives the Spirit, and so what the Father said of Jesus he also says of every person baptized into Christ: "This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." (CC)

as he was praying. Only Luke notes Jesus' praying at the time of his baptism. Jesus in prayer is one of the special themes of Luke (see 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:1; 22:32, 41; 23:34, 46). (CSB)

Detail mentioned only by Luke, who emphasized prayer in Jesus' ministry (5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:1; 22:32, 41; 23:34, 46). (TLSB)

Luke pictures Jesus as praying more often than the other evangelists. Jesus prays at significant moments in his ministry, e.g. before the Sermon on the Plain (6:12), at the confession of Peter and the first passion prediction (9:18), at the transfiguration (9:28-29), and before his betrayal (22:41). His final prayer is on the cross, when he cries out “Father into your hands I place my spirit” (23:46) (CC p. 158)

heaven was opened – ἀνεῳχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανόν—This is a theological passive that has God as its subject, i.e., “the heaven was opened” by God. (CC)

The opening of heaven at Jesus’ baptism means that it will forever be opened to all humanity through the flesh of Christ by the Spirit of Christ. (CC p. 159)

3:22 Holy Spirit descended. Luke specifies “in bodily form.” To John, it was a sign (see Jn 1:32–34; see also note on Mk 1:10). (CSB)

καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον—Only Luke has “Holy Spirit” (Mt 3:16: “Spirit of God”; Mk 1:10: “Spirit”), conforming to his reference to the Holy Spirit in 3:16. Luke refers to the Holy Spirit more often than the other gospels. (CC)

The appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove recalls Gen. 1:2, when the Spirit hovered over the waters in the first creation. The dove also recalls Noah after the flood (Gen. 8:8) (CC p. 161)

You are my son, whom I love. See Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1; Heb 1:5. Two other times the Gospel writers record the declarations of a voice from heaven addressing Jesus: (1) on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:35), and (2) in the temple area during Jesus’ final week (Jn 12:28). (CSB)

When the Father announces, “You are my Son, the beloved, in you I am well pleased” (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα), he speaks from Scripture, citing Ps 2:7, which some manuscripts include here. But ἀγαπητός, “beloved,” may also refer to Gen 22:2, 12, 16, where Isaac is called the “beloved son” (τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν), and God asks for him to be sacrificed. This similarity to Isaac recalls the centrality of the covenant with Abraham (as in the Benedictus) and supports the suggestion that there are *sacrificial* overtones in Jesus’ baptism. He begins his substitutionary atonement by condescending to take his place among sinners submitting to a baptism of repentance. A strong sacrificial theme is also apparent from the similarity to Is 42:1, the first verse of the first Suffering Servant Song, preparing for the fourth Isaiah Servant Song, Is 52:13–53:12. The connection to Is 42:1 also includes the placing of the Spirit upon “Jacob, my servant, ... Israel, my chosen one” (Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου ... Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου). That Luke has ἀγαπητός, “beloved,” instead of ἐκλεκτός, “elect/chosen one,” is not significant, since Luke uses ἐκλελεγμένος, “elect/chosen one” (9:35), instead of ἀγαπητός, “beloved” (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7), at the transfiguration. The Father’s goodwill (εὐδοκία), which rests on the “men of his good pleasure” (2:14), is now seen to flow down to the incarnate Son (ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα)—and through him to those who are in him. The Father’s good pleasure with the Son is the source of his good pleasure for those upon whom his favor rests. This good pleasure of the Father will include the fact that the Gospel (proclaimed in the mission of the seventy[-two]), though hidden from the wise, is revealed to babies (10:21; πατήρ ... εὐδοκία). The Father is also pleased to give the kingdom to the little flock (12:32; εὐδόκησεν ὁ πατήρ). The words of the Father here will be repeated with minor changes at Jesus’ transfiguration just before he turns his face to go to Jerusalem (9:35). (CC)

The Father’s affirmation echoes two messianic prophecies (Ps 2:7; Is 42:1), reinforcing that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. “You must honor Baptism and consider it glorious because of the

Word. For God Himself has honored it both by words and deeds. Furthermore, He confirmed it with miracles from heaven. Do you think it was a joke that, when Christ was baptized, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended visibly, and everything was divine glory and majesty?” (LC IV 21). (TLSB)

3:23–38 There are several differences between Luke’s genealogy and Matthew’s (1:2–16). Matthew begins with Abraham (the father of the Jewish people), while Luke traces the line in the reverse order and goes back to Adam, showing Jesus’ relationship to the whole human race (see note on 2:31). From Abraham to David, the genealogies of Matthew and Luke are almost the same, but from David on they are different. Some scholars suggest that this is because Matthew traces the legal descent of the house of David using only heirs to the throne, while Luke traces the complete line of Joseph to David. A more likely explanation, however, is that Matthew follows the line of Joseph (Jesus’ legal father), while Luke emphasizes that of Mary (Jesus’ blood relative). Although tracing a genealogy through the mother’s side was unusual, so was the virgin birth. Luke’s explanation here that Jesus was the son of Joseph, “so it was thought” (v. 23), brings to mind his explicit virgin birth statement (1:34–35) and suggests the importance of the role of Mary in Jesus’ genealogy. (CC)

Twin genealogies of Jesus appear in the NT, here and in Mt 1:1–17. They differ greatly. First, Luke’s genealogy is given at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, while Matthew’s appears at the beginning of the Gospel. Second, Luke’s genealogy works backward from Joseph, while Matthew’s works forward from Abraham. Third, Luke goes all the way back to Adam and God (v 38), while Matthew traces only back to Abraham. Most scholars believe that these respective arrangements are the result of, and consistent with, each evangelist’s special interests. On this understanding, Luke emphasizes that the Messiah descends from Adam and so is related to all nations, while Matthew focused on Jesus’ Judean roots, which accords with his desire to present Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham. Luke names the actual ancestors of Joseph’s branch of the family. Matthew likely gives a stylized legal line of descent from King David. (TLSB)