

The BODY OF SIN - Part 1

by John Joseph

“Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans 6.6)

In July 2017 while in a fully awake state, I received a vision which was of a naked man curled up in a membrane like an embryonic sac. He seemed to be in distress and struggling as though in pain. In the fetal position, he looked like someone suffering withdrawal.

The Word with this was:

That grasping, churning, yearning, lusting, wanting, inward-moving, never ceasing energy that, because it exists, must find ways of manifestation and expression. All of its expression can be summed up as LUST. It is the addictive personality – IT IS ADDICTION! In different individuals and groups it comes out differently, whether alcohol, gross flesh lusts, or religious highs. If it is patched up in one area of manifestation, it breaks out in another, for it must find expression. It has eruptions in certain areas depending on what sins we have given in to, or where weaknesses are because of sins in the family line. It must draw things into itself; that is its nature: the nature of self-centredness. All sin is self-centredness. It cannot be fixed up – it must be destroyed, but this is possible only with Christ. Only there, on the cross is it destroyed. Roms 6.6: *“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.”*

The old man is *the* habitual sinner. It is not him that we need to kill – he is dead! He was the actor, the driver, the prime mover who went along happily with sin. He leaves behind a legacy, a body of his creation, a body full of cravings – the body of sin – which needs be put to death experimentally to join its monstrous creator in death. We do not need to reckon the old man dead because simply HE IS DEAD! The body of sin is another matter. As Paul realised: *“It is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me.”* (Romans 7.17). What we need to know is, just what is this “sin that dwells in me”.

HIDING IN THE DARK

From June through August 2020 I reflected much on the vision and Word concerning the body of sin given me in July 2017. In the vision I saw a naked man in the fetal position inside an embryonic sac. The man was in some distress. Many times have I sought the Lord to tell me what follows from this, for although it was the beholding of a wonder and indeed illuminated the internal state and explained much about fleshly appetites and addictions, yet it left the question of: well, what follows from that? I have sought to know this. So now, having been given to understand the next parts of the revelation these are here presented.

The man is on the way to, or about to be, born. He will be born full grown. The body that he *is* has been nourished and formed by sin. The creature that comes forth is unmixed evil. This body is to be the vehicle, the more permanent receptacle of the soul in place of the physical body when it can no longer contain the spirit due to disintegration and death. But more than a vehicle, this body is the essence which overlays and permeates and *natures* the soul. The conception of its being springs from the evil seed of the serpent back in Genesis when he impregnated Eve. Every one of us has this thing in us from natural birth into this world, from Eve the mother of all living, and formed by the sins of our fathers to the third and fourth generation and by our own sins. This is the natural order obtaining for unredeemed man in this life and the next, and for the believer constitutes the flesh man that must by the Spirit be overcome and destroyed.

It is upon the dissolution of the physical body that the body of sin becomes wholly the body of the unredeemed soul. When we become regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, the development of this evil formation is thwarted and this thing can no longer feed freely or regularly as it did, and its development to maturity is accordingly checked whereupon its yearnings become increasingly intense and importunate. Hence the flesh wars against the spirit. Remember Esau and Jacob in the womb of Rebekah. Esau was of that carnal seed which sought instant gratification at the flesh level while Jacob was of the elect seed who so highly regarded things hoped for that he was prepared to work and wait for them. Diametrically opposed natures. Carnal and spiritual.

There was antagonism between them even in the womb. And we read: *“And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.”* (Gen 25.22).

So it is with us that an inner battle rages from which there is no withdrawal nor can any truce be struck.

NO WAY OUT

If Messiah had not come, humanity’s doom was sealed. Man would go on in this life and the next in a living hell chained to his sins and lusting to committing them over and over endlessly. This surely is what hell is, and while in it, the consciousness in it, of it, makes it everlasting.

The serpent who became the god of this world surely had taken charge of the whole human condition. There was no way out. The evil seed that had sprung up in man had reached full growth, and as for man being in the image of God, well, what a joke! – said the powers. We have created him in our image and the lusts of his new father he will do, and do and do. Victory is complete! Man will not rule the earth in our place. And so it was. But they, all of them, had deceived themselves... There was a wisdom they had not reckoned on. Enter the Lord Jesus.. on a mission!

“Who then can be saved?” exclaimed the disciples in dismay. And others may similarly enquire if any remediation could ever be possible in such a state of such abject hopelessness and despair. That is, if ever they could even grasp the woeful fate that did await all men and the woeful state they were already in. For the human race is a race of slaves from birth. Born into bondage and darkness, they cannot see their chains or comprehend their condition much less know anything of freedom or how to be free. While having consciousness of the outer world they are dead to the fact they are dead. Dead to God and spiritual realities. Yet all know that something is wrong – with themselves, and with the world around them. But in darkness they can never find what it is. Who then can be saved? **“With man it is impossible.”** replied our Lord.

And then as if to smile on His followers and ease their fear He added “But not with God, for with God all things are possible.” He brought light into a darkened world. He was the Light, the true Light that came into the world. And the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot comprehend it and cannot overcome it.

The precise mission of the Son of God in coming down from heaven in mortal form for the precise purpose of dying as representative of the human race had two objectives which are clearly set forth in scripture:

- 1) To destroy the works of the devil, and,
- 2) To deliver his prisoners.

HE CAME TO DESTROY THE SYSTEM

He came to destroy the system and its generals and its foot soldiers, and to free and then empower an army that would in His name tear down all the gates of hell, of imprisonment, of bondage, and release all the prisoners, and under His headship, become a government that would ensure both liberty and order for mankind.

We may have been taught from worldly knowledge that there have been several great revolutions in the history of man. In reality, these revolutions while changing some conditions in this life for good or evil did not do and could not have done anything to affect the root cause of human misery and suffering. They brought no lasting light into the darkness of the world; they could not go to the cause of the problem – which is the heart of man. No matter what cosmetic changes occurred, the same old puppet masters were still pulling the strings. Man was still a prisoner to them and to their nature infused in him. For man to be free the rulers needed to be dethroned, the heart of man transformed, and the residual poison of the serpent extracted from man’s soul. Jesus Christ is the only true revolutionary in the history of man. All the rest who positioned themselves in front of Him were thieves and robbers. It took the Son of God to become a man, to become one of us to deliver us and carry out the only real revolution there’s ever been. When He comes in His Sons it won’t be to take sides in any of the affairs of this world. He’s not coming to take sides, but to take over.

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

(Hebrews 2. 14,15).

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

(1 John 3.8).

The Greek word *‘katargeo’* rendered ‘destroy’ means literally ‘to reduce to inactivity, ‘to be entirely idle’, ‘useless’ or ‘to undo’.

The mission was fully accomplished!

The work of the Cross was complete but the fruit thereof was to come forth in stages as the Holy Spirit would accomplish. Internal stages and external -- beginning in His called-out ones, then to all humanity culminating in the restitution of all things. The salvation He gained was all encompassing. Not only was it to those living in physical bodies who heard the good news of the gospel, but to an evil generation long passed which had experienced the wrath and judgment of God and were still the spirits in prison – a generation so evil that on account of them God destroyed the whole world to utterly rid the world of them and all the works of their hands sparing only Noah who was righteous and his family.

To that evil generation in prison the Lord Jesus went and preached the good news after He had reconciled the whole world back to God. The whole world from generations back to generations forward.

As was the fall so is the return. The one single work of redemption is the one single work of regeneration where the life and nature of God comes again into man and is contrary to that life and nature already in him derived from the serpent’s seed. Our salvation is no more or less than God’s Life in us.

WE ARE NOT FROM AROUND HERE

At this point it is necessary that a certain misconception be put right. When we first encounter Christ as Saviour, that is not when we are born again. For every birth there has to be at some prior time a conception. If you ran to an altar call and “accepted” Jesus, and that was when you were born again, then where was the conception? It is that point, that moment that *was* the conception, the regeneration. We go on from there until “Christ be formed in us” and then we are born full grown in the stature [age] of Christ because He is born in us.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature [age] of the fulness of Christ.”

(Ephesians 4.13).

He is born in us and we are born in Him. The eating and drinking of his body and blood through the Word is what feeds our new body WITHIN.

We have literally His body substance as our body. (We are the body of Christ).

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood you have no life in you.” (John 6.53).

Great is the mystery that while we are progressively dying in this world we are at the same time being formed in the womb of another world.

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” (2Cor 4.10).

Our lineage is from that other world. All our springs are in Zion. Only that which comes from that world will go back to that world. We are from that world. We are not from this world.

“...your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col 3.3).

THE SIN PROBLEM

Meanwhile, *now*, in these flesh bodies while on the earth, Christ grows up in us and we in Him, and the body of sin languishes in anguish and frustration. It is the body of addiction, and since Christ's revelation and increase in us, it is in a state of deprivation. Its only sustenance is sin and it lusts and wins battles against the spirit until the time when the Seed of Christ grows sufficiently to overpower it (for the Seed of Christ will prevail). "*He (the seed of the woman) will bruise [mortally wound] you to the head and you shall bruise [snap at] his heel.*" (Genesis 3.15 Hebrew Interlinear)

The Cross was a complete work. The old man, the actor, the sinner, is DEAD but the body of sin, the works of his hands lives on, and until it too is undone, we will in measure serve sin. [Do not despair when at times the flesh gets the better of you. We are in a PROCESS of transformation. Cast yourself upon God for His mercy and cleansing by the Blood.] Herein is gold if we can see it: The sin problem is laid to rest when the body of sin is laid to rest. "*..that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" That destruction or the undoing of this evil formation around our souls is the major struggle which we together with the Holy Spirit are involved in, and He is mightily on our side.

The suffering which is attendant on this process is much more bearable when we see its good purpose; indeed it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

For the unregenerate, the body of sin grows and matures largely unhindered. There may be some attempts to rein in its more extreme excesses and addictions through behaviour modification and step programs etc, but these have pitiful success, and even if successful in an area, there inevitably occurs an eruption in another area of the flesh.

The body of sin has many different expressions and lodges many occupants each with their own particular affections and lusts. Prior to physical death that body lies hidden to natural eyes while it feeds and develops in all its grotesqueness. It has one thing in common with the body of righteousness -- it too is from another world.

The believer's struggles with the flesh – the same things over and over again – are the movements of this formation ever needing expression – expression in conformity to its formation.

Little does a young man (or a young woman) know that when he sows his wild oats he sows a body that will rule his soul and outlive his physical body. Sound is the wisdom of Prophet Jeremiah that: "*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*" (Lamentations 3.27).

For unbelievers, all their springs are in the world mind coming out of the cosmic world system. Adam is plugged into the world, and the system makes sure he is well fed and programmed with its fallen wisdom and knowledge.

For what is the world system (Gk. *kosmos*) but a giant formation that ever energises the fallen self/soul life. Lust and pride of life bring the world into the fallen self. Adam feeds. The fallen self by nature draws to itself, ingratiates itself in lust and expands itself in the pride of life. The pride of life can only be in a fallen life. The gratitude of life is in an unfallen life.

The body of sin, like any organism, requires nourishment to grow. Every sin contributes to a particular formation in the body of sin; every sin makes an impression in the development of that body. The young man's excesses and the businessman's ruthlessness, the minister's pride, the wife's adultery and the husband's domination – all construct a spiritual body to the soul from the essences of sins. The hell so created for the soul unto itself outlasts this life and comes into its own in the next, and short of the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus, nothing would ever have changed that. Until Christ came into the world humankind had no hope. In human lives young and old we can often see in the face or the walk or in the demeanour the characteristics of sin and evil in the spiritual body. These reflected in the physical body.

In attempting to understand God's infiniteness, Love may be the key because God is love and love is ever expanding because ever reaching out to the other. "*Love seeketh not her own.*" (1 Corinthians 13).

While the Adam man satisfies his flesh daily and feeds the body of sin, the believer is called on to put to death his flesh daily by the power of the Spirit and deprive the body of sin. One self drawing in and becoming less and the other giving out and becoming more. One of the great wonders of God and of Love.

TWO LIVES: ONLY ONE ABIDES FOREVER

“And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever.” (1John 2.17).

The Christian mystic, Francis Lee, (1660-1719) sees it: “For heaven and hell have each of them *their foundation within us*; they come not into us from *without*, but spring up in us (as said Christ) according as our will and heart is turned either to the light of God or the kingdom of darkness.

“Therefore when this life, which is in the midst of these two eternities is at an end, either an angel or a devil will certainly be found to have a birth in us....

(But) “To live in the love and patience and humility of Christ, then the celestial, transparent, spiritual body of an angel is continually forming itself and growing in *and from*, and about our souls, till it comes to the fulness of the stature of Christ Jesus; this is the true eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, which will become our body of glory to all eternity...for where the true Spirit of Christ is, there is his true spiritual body. On the other hand, live to selfishness, to diabolical pride, wrath, envy, and covetousness, and nothing can hinder these tempers from forming within us such a spiritual body to our soul, as that which devils have, and dwell, and work in.” (end quote).

Every man exits this life by putting off the physical vessel. Death to the body is the spirit’s departure from it. “*..the body without the spirit is dead.*” (James 2.26). He then finds himself in a spirit/soul body whether good or whether evil.

WHAT CAN WE DO

But you may wonder in all this, what do we do? What part do I play to possibly remedy this horrendous state of affairs already in place? We must repeat that the work of the cross is a

complete work, but its fruit come in stages. As the Lord Jesus is the One who put the old man to death, so it is He by the Spirit who brings the body of sin into death.

It is the Cross on both counts which undoes all the works of the devil. It is not you by strength of will or abhorrence of sin or faith or even love of God that prevails to destroy a spiritual substance.

You can no more kill the body of sin than you can kill the old man, than you can justify, sanctify and glorify yourself. It is all the Lord’s work in you.

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that HE might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3.8).

Our part is to believe, yield to, and obey the Holy Spirit in His good work in us, which He only can do. In this, we by grace facilitate an environment conducive to the growth of Christ in us. The Holy Spirit leads us in this. “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” (Romans 8.14). When Christ grows up in us, we grow up in Him.

PRAYER: *Grow up in me O Lord, that I might grow up in You.*

So far we have been more focussed on what amounts to just one side of the inward transformation. But, as the Apostle says, we do not want to be found unclothed in the ages to come. The undoing of the body of sin is only half the picture. Parallel with its demise is the increase of the Body of Christ. As the Holy Spirit sets about undoing, dismantling the body of sin, bringing it into death, another wonder unfolds within us. Rising and being formed from the ashes of the sacrifice (see Romans 12.1), in the same place where the body of sin is decaying away, there emerges the body of righteousness, the Body of Christ. [Note: For an elaboration on this please see: “Not Different But Opposite”.]

What is seen (in the heavenlies) is a displacement process whereby the old is being pushed out by the new, and this process is not peaceful. We see (and feel) nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom – WITHIN – even earthquakes in divers places, and wars and rumours of wars. This is not a time of peace.

But as the wars of David gave way to the peaceable reign of Solomon, so will the coming of Christ's kingdom within usher in everlasting peace for each one of us.

THE HOPE OF GLORY

True it is indeed that had the principalities and powers known the hidden work that God proposed to do through Christ to destroy all their works, to bring to nothing all their plans, to evict them from their thrones, to lay them in the dust; and, in His saints to redeem them, cleanse them, sanctify them, and glorify them, they never, ever, would have crucified the Lord of Glory. But there is a mystery here in God concerning His glory and the glory of His Son in the redemption of mankind which was hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints. It is Christ in you the hope of glory (see Colossians Ch. 1). It is not Christ apart who is the *hope* of glory; Christ is already the Glory. It is not you that has any hope of glory. It is Christ-in-you – the composite – that is the hope of glory!

Comprehending where man's destiny would be without Christ and conversely what glories await him in Christ we begin to appreciate the monumental salvation of **JESUS**: what He saves us to and what He saves us from. To *see* this is nothing less than breathtaking!

We thank the Lord that he forgave us our sins, but He didn't come just to forgive us our sins. God was doing that under the old covenant, though it had to be done repeatedly as the sin problem remained. *"His name shall be called JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1.21). This is infinitely more than forgiveness. If you are saved from death, then death is stopped – it doesn't get you; if you are saved from poverty, then poverty is stopped – it can no longer get you; if you are saved from your sins, then your sins are stopped – they can no longer get you. To cease to serve sin utterly [see again Roms 6.6] is to have the old man dead and the body of sin dead. There is more.

Our God is a God of wonder. The name Jesus (*Yeshua* in Hebrew) means salvation. He is THE gift from God. To be saved from our sins is to recapture unfallenness again – no less than that – but rather more, as our elevation through death

and resurrection into a new life is unto a perfection higher than Adam's innocency.

The work of redemption was never an afterthought of God but ever in His creation plan for the perfecting of man. As the psalms repeatedly intone, let us ask God to show us His salvation. This is all about spiritual understanding.

Spiritual maturity is all about understanding. Understanding *what's going on*. There is much power in understanding (see Proverbs 8.14 and 15-21). We that are in this tabernacle do groan because of being weighed down by the body of this death. But our biggest enemy is darkness. That is, in not knowing what's going on. It is because of our ignorance that we often accept the condemnation from the voice of the flesh where it unjustly blames the spirit, falsely, persistently charging it with unfaithfulness, when all the while the body of sin is the culprit until overcome by Christ in His rising within. God says: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."* (Hosea 4.6).

SEEING IT AS IT IS

So, to see how the flesh operates in us and to gain an understanding of what the body of sin is and does, is to gain an enormous advantage in the spiritual life and struggle. Can we see that all those stirrings within and those thoughts that you hate and get sick and tired of experiencing – are not you!? They are not from you. They are a hangover from the old creation's creation – the body of sin. It is his stirrings and yearnings to sin that vex the people of God who cry out as the apostle Paul who, having come through heart wrenching travail to the place of seeing this, says: *"It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."* (Romans 7.17). Having come right through to the other side, he concludes: *"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God."* (Romans 7.25). Note the reiterated emphasis: with-the-mind; I; myself. *Everything* that he, Paul, is *by nature* serves the law of God gladly and naturally from the heart.

It is only the not-Paul, indeed the Saul of Tarsus, or rather his monstrous progeny under a death sentence that would *by nature* continue to serve the law of sin. As Paul, so too it is with you dear ones. Let not the flesh man condemn you for his

deeds. His voice is but the echo of a dead man. Truly, “*There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*” (Romans. 8.1).

Each one who reads these lines has an extraordinary destiny in God. No one who has done anything extraordinary in God has not had first to come face to face with the rottenness of his or her own flesh which must be felt in all its bondage and tasted in all its bitterness if the full deliverance is to be reached. But from there and from the tears, we, by the ever continuing, never failing, grace of God, move on forgetting the things that are behind in death and stretching forth for the things that lie ahead in life in Christ Jesus. Great is Thy faithfulness.

In this hour God is calling and preparing His Sons. He is after something more than ordinary, and no Son of God is ordinary. God is not making you into anything that is just normal, as we call normal. It is something more, something extraordinary, and our experience therefore is extraordinary.

Let us strive for a God’s eye view. Man, presently constituted, is not a permanent being. Man, as man, i.e. the human being, is a transitional being. The Lord Jesus rarely referred to himself as ‘man’ but ‘Son of man’. Son of man is indeed man. True man. But mere man is not Son of man. The telos of man without God is man in the image of the devil. “*Ye are of your father the devil*” (John 8.44). The telos of Son of man is man in the image of God because he is of God by a divine seed because God is his Father.

Addendum

An extract from Jane Leade’s
(1624-1704)

The Heavenly Cloud Now Breaking

It cannot be made out better, than that worthy Apostle hath done it, as you will find in the sixth and seventh Chapters of the *Romans*, he laying down full and clear Arguments, shewing the necessity for a Spiritual Death. So as we need not doubt but it will be granted. In the next place we are to consider, how it shall be effected. I would not fright any, if I tell them, it is at the first on-set *Bloody Work*: where-ever this Sacrificing Knife doth come, it will touch to the quick.

But then consider in whose hand it is put; our *Emmanuel’s*, whose Love we may well confide in: who acteth this Tragical part by the Lance of his Spirit, and will fall only upon the viperous Body of Sin, to let out the very Heart blood of it. So it must be, for there is no favouring that Life, that hath made all this to do, in reference to God and our selves, spoiling and defacing that pure *Angelical Image*, in which the most Holy One took such delight to see his own Similitude.

And for your Comfort know, he goeth not to work violently all at once, but considers our Mould and Frame: He allures the Soul into it by degrees, shewing and setting before it the absolute necessity for it, forcing all of Love-enticements to follow him in this track of *Dying*, despising the Shame and Contempt of it, as by Faith seeing what Glory, Honour, and Immortality of Life with Christ will ensue hereupon.

This is then only our business, to introvert our Life into Christ our Lord, for him to offer it up in us, through his Eternal Spirit, as he did in his own personal Body, who laid it down freely. So now he wooeth the Soul to a voluntary assignment of the whole Man of Sin for expiation. So that when the Heart and Will is gained and brought over, the dying Work will not be so grievous and terrible, as many have feared: This I can assure you, from my own Experience, having been long and deeply Exercised herein; knowing that great Comforts and Supports will meet you in your dying Agonies, through Internal infusions: that may be felt as a burning Spirit, that runneth into every part, till it giveth ease to the burthened in Sin, and will not leave it, while there is any thing of an evil Essence remaining; if the Soul agrees and gives consent thereunto. And truly, a well-informed Soul that lies under any powerful constraint of Christ’s Love can do no less, but herewithal comply, and deliver up the accursed Thing. And when it cometh to this, what a hopeful dispatch will there be, for the cutting off every Member in the Body of Sin? O, where shall we find a wise and valiant *Jael* to smite *Sisera*, aiming at the Head-Life, the very Root of Sin in its original!
(end of extract)

When henceforth we pray: ‘Grow up in me O Lord’, let us do it with renewed vision and faith with understanding, appreciating more the precious and holy work of God in each of us made possible by Jesus. This is that pearl of great price.