

# The Redemption of the Body

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We are all born with a nature that is part of the flesh that we are made of. The brains of our bodies turn what we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel into thoughts. Our thoughts are so integrated with the rest of our bodies that they can elicit hormonal reactions that influence our feelings of pleasure, anger, fright, and even our sexual impulses. For instance, a normal emotional response to a slap on the cheek might be fear or anger. Both of these emotions are associated with an adrenalin hormone "Fight or flight" response that raises the pulse rate and dries the mouth. It is our natures that determine how we react to the thoughts and emotional stimulations of our bodies.

The Scriptures teach us that Adam's fleshly nature was corrupted when he sinned. He passed that corrupted nature on down to each one of us, so that we are born with sinful natures. Romans 5:12 tells us: that "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." And even if Adam hadn't, sinned, we have all sinned and corrupted our own fleshly natures just as Adam did.

Our fleshly natures are totally corrupted by sin. We are not only sinners by practice, we are sinners by nature. The reason we sin is that our fleshly natures are so selfish, proud, and full of lust, that we cannot please God. We need to acknowledge, as the Apostle Paul did in Romans 7:18, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells."

The good news is that we can obtain new sinless natures from God. When we repent and accept the death of Jesus Christ as the payment for our sins, we are redeemed by His blood and born again by the Holy Spirit. 1 John 3:9 tells us that "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for (God's) seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." In other words, as a child of God, every true Christian receives a new nature that is not corrupted by sin. Our new natures are holy instead of sinful. They can not and do not sin.

The old fleshly nature is generally called "The flesh," in the Scriptures, though it is descriptly called "The old man (or "Old self") in Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, and Colossians 3:9. The new spiritual nature is usually referred to as the "Spirit " or "The new man" (or "New self").

The Christian's biggest problem is that we are still in the same bodies that our old sinful natures are a part of. Throughout our lives our old fleshly natures struggle with our new spiritual natures for control of our behavior. As Galatians 5:17 puts it, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

An interesting bit of imagery in the Book of Genesis illustrates this struggle remarkably well. Abraham's offering Isaac on the altar in chapter 22 is a prophetic type of God the Father offering His Son on the cross as the sacrificial payment for our sins. Abraham's sending his servant to get a bride for Isaac in chapter 24 is like the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the world to gather individuals into the church as a bride for Christ. Finally, the intense struggle in Rebecca's womb in chapter 25 is like the Christian's inner struggle. When Rebecca inquired of the Lord, He replied that her problem was that there were two peoples inside her. One would be stronger than the other, and the older was to be subservient to the younger. In other words, the Christian has two natures, but his new spiritual nature is to dominate his old fleshly nature and be the one that determines his behavior.

Since Christ died in our place for the sins of our old fleshly natures, God considers them dead in Christ. Colossians 3:3 says, "You died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Romans 6:5 & 6 explains that "If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Romans 6:11-14 continues, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." We are to ignore to the sinful impulses of our old fleshly natures, as though they were dead, and be responsive to the Holy Spirit's prompting of our new spiritual natures that are alive to God.

Galatians 5:17 tells us that if we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Verses 19-26 explain the difference between the behaving in the flesh and behaving the Spirit. "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

I Corinthians 15:42-49 tells us that there are natural bodies made in the image of Adam and spiritual bodies made in the image of Christ, the heavenly Man. Even though we were born with natural bodies that die because of sin, each Christian will be resurrected with a spiritual body that is not subject to death. Verses 51-53 go on to assure us that we may not all die, but we will all be changed. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,...the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." When the Lord Jesus comes for us, He will change our natural fleshly bodies into incorruptible and immortal spiritual bodies like His own. These new bodies will not have sinful natures, so the Christian struggle will finally be over.

Philippians 3:20 & 21 reminds us that we "Eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body." According to Luke 24:39 Christ's resurrected body, though vastly different, is still tangible, being made of flesh and bones. Won't it be wonderful to have a glorified body like our risen Savior's body to go along with the sinless nature that we received when we were born again? This will be the redemption of our bodies that is eagerly waited for in Romans 8:22-25. Praise the Savior!

(All Quotations from the NKJV translation)

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