Dying and rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology

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ROBERT C. TANNEHILL

DYING AND RISING WITH CHRIST
A STUDY IN PAULINE THEOLOGY

VERLAG ALFRED TÖPELMANN · BERLIN

1967
Dying with Christ in this sense is central to Bultmann's understanding of the saving significance of the cross. My understanding of Paul has been influenced by Bultmann, both through appropriation and reaction, more than the few references to his work reveal. It is not to be supposed that this is primarily a study for or against Bultmann. However, it does have implications for this question, and we will consider these implications in the appropriate place.

To determine whether Paul is making use of the motif of dying and rising with Christ it is not sufficient to look for the phrase συν Χριστῷ or the use of a verb compounded with συν. We are not dealing here with the formula συν Χριστῷ, comparable to ἐν Χριστῷ, as Lohmeyer thought in his influential article. A formula is only present when there is a clear tendency to express an idea by a set phrase. Instead, we find a variety of formulations: with συν as an independent preposition, with συν- attached to a verb, and with phrases which do not use συν at all. It is better, then, to speak of dying and rising with Christ as a motif. It is not a set phrase, but it is a set pattern of thought which has functions in Paul's thought and is used in constructions which show a definite consistency. The motif of dying and rising with Christ may be said to be present when Paul refers to the believers' participation in Christ's death or resurrection by means of a construction which relates two elements which stand in the same contrast to each other as "death" and "life" and are related in thought to these terms.

Paul's use of this motif falls into two major groups: the texts which refer to dying with Christ as a decisive, past event, and those which refer to dying with Christ as a present experience, especially in suffering. To these must be added two texts from I Thessalonians, where it is used with special reference to the future resurrection. We must begin our investigation with those passages which refer to dying with Christ as a past event.  

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12 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
13 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
14 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
15 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
17 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
18 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
19 Cf. pp. 73–74.  
20 Cf. pp. 73–74. 

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Part I

Dying with Christ as the Basis of the New Life

In the passages discussed in Part I dying with Christ refers to a decisive, past event. The ensuing new life is both a present experience and an object of hope. Dying and rising with Christ is here related to two dominions or aeons and their rulers, and indicates release from one and transfer to the other. The emphasis is on the newness of Christian existence against certain dangers of falling back into the existence of the old dominion.

I. Romans 6

a. The Significance of Paul's Reference to Baptism

In order to understand the significance of the verses in Rom. 6 which refer to dying and rising with Christ, it is essential that they be interpreted in their setting. This setting is the contrast of two dominions and their lords. The full significance of this setting will only be apparent when we see that closely related ideas occur in all of the passages which refer to dying with Christ as a decisive event in the past.

This setting has not been given sufficient importance in the interpretation of Rom. 6:1–5. One cause of this has been the desire to draw from these verses Paul's doctrine of baptism. This has resulted in the isolation of these verses from their context. The sources for Paul's teaching on baptism consist only of scattered, occasional references made in connection with a particular problem or for purposes of exhortation. Rom. 6 appears to go more deeply into the question of baptism, and some interpreters see here the uniquely Pauline interpretation of baptism. However, we will see that in Rom. 6 also Paul is not primarily concerned to set forth an interpretation of baptism. Failure to recognize this has contributed to mistaken emphases in the interpretation of dying and rising with Christ.

The chapter is a single unit and is dominated by one major concern, that of answering certain objections which might be raised...
against the thesis of justification by grace through faith. On the basis of his assertion in δ 29, Paul formulates in 6:1 a possible objection in the form of a question: "What then shall we say? Should we remain in sin in order that grace might abound?" That this question concerns a central problem in Romans is shown by the fact that the objection on which it is based is already referred to in 3:8, then dropped until Paul has laid the foundation of his argument, then taken up in a fundamental way in chapter 6. The question of 6:1 is repeated in slightly different form in vs. 15. There have been some attempts to discern a distinction between the question in vs. 15 and that in vs. 1, and therewith a progress in the thought which warrants seeing vss. 15ff. as a new section. If this is so, it might be that the first half of the chapter is concerned to set forth Paul's interpretation of baptism. But vss. 15ff. do not deal with a different topic than the first half of the chapter. It is not possible, for instance, to say that the first half of the chapter is concerned with the "transfer to the new order of being" through baptism while vss. 15ff. are concerned with the "proper fulfillment of the new life," for this distinction tears apart what Paul holds together. For Paul the transfer to a new "order of being" means a new way of life in service to a new master, and this fact is already made clear before vs. 15. The idea of obedience as slaves to one of two masters in vss. 15ff. is simply a further development of the ideas of sin "reigning" or "having dominion" and of the necessity of "presenting" oneself in obedience to God rather than in which we find in vss. 12-14². To be sure, some new terms are introduced in vss. 15ff., and the ends to which the two slaveries lead are made clear. To that extent there is progress of thought, but this consists only in enriching the basic idea of the two contrasting lordships which is already present in vss. 12-14. Therefore, vs. 15 is more a break in the style than an indication of a new section which deals with a new problem. A basic division of the chapter at vs. 15 can not be supported, for the ethical concern of vss. 15ff. is present in the first half of the chapter also.

A basic division of the chapter at vss. 11 or 12 must be rejected also. It is true that these verses mark a turning point in Paul's argument, with through baptism. However, this exhortation is presented as the inference which is to be drawn from the argument in the preceding part of the chapter (vs. 11-οГ7ΙΟ; vs. 12-όν). This results in the binding together of indicative ("we died with Christ" — vs. 8; we are "no longer slaves to sin" — vs. 6) and imperative ("reckon yourselves to be dead to sin" — vs. 11; "do not let sin reign" — vs. 12), a connection which is characteristic of Paul⁴ and which is basic to his argument here. For Paul the imperatives which begin at vs. 11 can no more be separated from the indicatives which precede than conclusion can be separated from premise, and so the chapter can not be divided at vss. 11 or 12 without playing havoc with Paul's argument. Furthermore, the basic idea of subjection to a master which is developed in vss. 15ff. is already referred to in vs. 6. The assertion there that the believer is no longer a slave to sin because he has been crucified with Christ is Paul's major concern even in the first part of the chapter. This is shown by vss. 1-2. It is also clear from the way in which the argument develops in vss. 5-10. Günther Bornkamm has pointed out that there is an interesting parallel between vss. 5-7 and 8-10⁶. Both vss. 5 and 8 move from a conditional protasis with ει and indicative, asserting participation in the death of Christ as a condition which is fulfilled, to the conclusion of future participation in the resurrection of Christ. This is supported in vss. 6 and 9 by a closer explanation of what this means, in each case connected to the preceding by a causal participle which is to be translated "since we know . . ." (vs. 6 — γινομαιναι, vs. 9 — τις). The explanation given is in terms of release from the power of sin (vs. 6) or of death (vs. 9). Vss. 7 and 10 then add further support for these assertions in short sentences connected to the preceding by γε. In both cases referring to release from sin and its claims. The major difference between vss. 5-7 and 8-10 is that vss. 6-7 focus on the believers' release from the old dominion while vss. 8-10 speak of Christ's death to sin and new life to God. Yet these are not two separate things, for it is the assertion of vss. 5 and 8 that the believers' death is involved in that of Christ. The way in which the basic statements in vss. 5 and 8 are developed in vss. 6-7 and 9-10 makes Paul's central concern clear. He is interested in the idea of dying and rising with Christ because it implies death to the old dominion of sin and new life to God. This is the point which is important for his argument in this chapter, and the means by which he answers the question of vs. 1. Only vss. 3-4 refer to baptism, and even these verses reveal Paul's concern to interpret the Christian's present relation to sin (cf. vs. 4b — "in order that . . . we might walk in newness of life"). There is no "baptismal section" which can be isolated from the rest of the chapter because it shows an independent interest in a doctrine

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³ Cp. especially the exhortation in vs. 13 with those in vss. 16 and 19.

⁴ Cf. I Cor. 5:7; Gal. 5:16.

of baptism. From the beginning to the end of the chapter Paul is concerned with the Christian's relation to the dominion of sin. Therefore, we must ask this question: What is the function of the reference to baptism in vs. 3-4 within Paul's basic argument? Why is it that Paul refers to baptism here when baptism as such is not the problem with which he is concerned?

We do not find the most primitive use of dying and rising with Christ as a baptismal motif in Rom. 6. In Rom. 6 Paul speaks of dying with Christ as a past event, but of rising with Christ as future. In Col. 2 11-13 we again find the motif of dying and rising with Christ used in a passage which explicitly refers to baptism. There, however, rising with Christ is spoken of in the past tense. That we find the more primitive form of this baptismal motif in Col. 2 rather than Rom. 6 is shown by the fact that Paul presupposes this past resurrection with Christ even though he chooses to speak of rising with Christ as still future. This is clear from the parallel between Christ's resurrection and the believers' walking in newness of life in vs. 4, and from the phrases ἐνεπτυχόμενος τοῦ θανάτου and ἐν νεφελῇ ἐνεπτυχόμενος in vs. 11 and 13. Paul appears to be modifying an idea which already had a fixed form rather than creating a new idea. The baptismal motif which Paul uses in Rom. 6 already had a history behind it.

The importance of this is often obscured by interpreting the future verbs in vs. 5 and 8 as "logical" futures rather than real references to future time. The argument for this is based mainly on the assertion that a present participation in new life is presupposed and a reference to the future resurrection would be out of place. JOHANNES SCHNEIDER, for instance, points to the reference to walking in newness of life in vs. 4 and then argues that, since vs. 5 is meant to support this, the future verb cannot refer to future time.

This argument can not be accepted. There is no reason why Paul had to use a future verb in vs. 5 if he were not really referring to the future. ὅταν would have expressed a logical conclusion as well as ἐνεπτυχόμενος. Furthermore, in vs. 8 Paul makes quite clear that this is a real reference to the future by the addition of ἐν εὐαγγελίῳ. This shows that life with Christ is an object of faith, not of sight. The sentence continues by referring to Christ's release from the dominion of death through his resurrection. This is something which the believers have not yet experienced. The parallel between vs. 5 and 8 would indicate that vs. 5 is also a real reference to the future.

7 Cf. Rom. 8 10-11, 18-25.
8 Cf. p. 9.

It is not true that a real future makes no sense in the context. Paul's thought here is more complex than SCHNEIDER realizes. This is shown by three considerations. First, the dominion of death is very closely related to the dominion of sin, and 5 21 and 6 9 show that the thought of death's lordship, to which the Christian is still subject, is not far from Paul's mind. Second, it is no great step for Paul to move from a reference to present participation in newness of life to a reference to the future resurrection, as he does in vs. 4-5. For Paul these are two aspects of the Christian's participation in eschatological life, and he can easily move from the one to the other, as he does in II Cor. 4 10-14 and Phil. 3 10-11. Third, there is, nevertheless, a good reason why there is no reference in the Pauline homologomena to rising with Christ as a past, accomplished fact. SCHNEIDER asserts that in II Cor. 4 10-14 and Phil. 3 10-11, there is, nevertheless, a good reason why there is no reference in the Pauline homologomena to rising with Christ as a past, accomplished fact. SCHNEIDER asserts that walking in newness of life presupposes that the believer has already risen from the grave. So it does, and yet Paul chooses to speak of participation in Christ's new life only as something which is now in progress as part of a life open to the attacks of the powers of the old dominion, or as something which is still future. We must now investigate Paul's reason for speaking in this way.

I Cor. 10 1-13 shows that Paul had occasion to oppose a view of the sacraments which regarded them as a guarantee of salvation. Against this view Paul warns of the judgment which awaits the evildoer, and points out that it has fallen even on those who were baptized and partook of spiritual food. "Let him who thinks that he stands take care lest he fall" (vs. 12). It was not only in connection with the sacraments that Paul found it necessary to caution the believers in light of the future. Paul was involved in a wide-ranging battle on this point. An important part of the battle against his opponents in Corinth was waged over the question of whether this sober caution was necessary or whether salvation was already given in the present in such a way that one had nothing left to do but glory in it. Thus Paul exhorts in I Cor. 4 6, "Already you have been satiated! Already you have become rich! Without us you have begun to reign!" — and goes on to contrast the apostle's life of suffering and dishonor to this false fulfillment. Paul also deals with his suffering as an apostle in II Corinthians, interpreting it there in terms of dying and rising with Christ. Through his suffering Paul continues to participate in Christ's death, and this is a check against any "boasting." This caution against boasting in what one already possesses contrasts sharply with the attitude of the opponents, who are "puffed
up” because of their “knowledge” and spiritual gifts14. Since this caution is expressed by means of the motif of dying and rising with Christ, which is used to emphasize that Paul still participates in Christ’s death and so must look to the future for a resurrection with Christ beyond what he knows now, it is not surprising that Paul avoids referring to rising with Christ as a past, completed fact in Rom. 6. The believer participates in the new life in the present, but Paul is careful to make clear that it does not become the believer’s possession. It is realized through a continual surrender of one’s present activity to God, a walking in newness of life, and at the same time it remains God’s gift for the future. Both of these aspects make clear that the new life remains in God’s control, and the future verbs in Rom. 6s and 6s play their part in bringing this out. Thus, the tense of these verbs is important to Paul, and they are not to be dismissed as “logical” futures.

The recognition that Paul, in avoiding reference to a past resurrection with Christ, is modifying an idea which already had a fixed form points as toward an answer to the question posed above. Why does Paul refer to baptism in Rom. 6 when he is not concerned with baptism as such? This reference to baptism must have contributed to the development of the basic ideas with which Paul wished to work. For this to be the case, the theme of dying with Christ must have been already connected with baptism, so that taking up this theme brought with it the reference to baptism. It is likely that the connection of this theme with baptism was present not only in Paul’s mind, but much more widely in the tradition of the early church. The reference to baptism furthers Paul’s argument only if the connection of dying with Christ and baptism is one which is generally accepted. Elsewhere Paul introduces a reference to baptism in order to support his argument (cf. I Cor. 12 18, Gal. 3 27). It is likely that Paul refers to baptism in Rom. 6 because he believes the idea of dying with Christ in baptism is known and accepted by the Roman Christians, so that through it they can be led to understand Paul’s conception of the relation of the believer to sin.

This is supported by the form of Paul’s argument. The significance of the phrase “do you not know” in vs. 3 has been much discussed. HANS LIETZMANN asserts that ἐὰν θυσάω and ἴδε ὅλως ὁμώτατο αὐτῶν refer “stets auf bereits Bekanntes” and uses this as one argument that dying and rising with Christ in baptism was “Gemeindeglaube.”11

12 Heilsgeschehen, pp. 29–30. Similarly WAGNER, Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem, pp. 292–93. WAGNER points to the συνήθεια at the beginning of vs. 4 as an indication that Paul begins there to add his own interpretation. However, there is no shift in basic idea from vs. 3 to vs. 4. Rather, the συνήθεια is an emphatic way of expressing what is already implied in vs. 3. Cf. pp. 22–24, 34.
13 In the revised edition of his work, SCHNACKENBURG recognizes that Rom. 6 1–14 “is motivated by an ethos-aporetic point of view,” but still holds that in vs. 4–6 Paul “manifestly offers his own views.” Cf. Baptism, pp. 32, 136, 143.

This is questioned by OTTO KUS, who argues for the possibility that Paul is simply speaking in terms of a “polite pedagogy” and is really transmitting new ideas13. It might also be possible to limit the reference of ἐὰν θυσάω to vs. a, and so see the interpretation of baptism as dying with Christ in the following verses as specifically Pauline. This is the view of SCHNACKENBURG,12 both KUS and SCHNACKENBURG fail to see the subordinate place of the reference to baptism in Rom. 612. They also fail to see that ἐὰν θυσάω is not an isolated phrase, but is picked up later by phrases which are related in function and which refer clearly to dying with Christ. In these phrases dying with Christ (in vs. a, Christ’s resurrection) is set forth as the basis from which a conclusion is drawn. Thus, in vs. 5 we find a conditional sentence with σύν and indicative in the protasis. As BLASS-DEBRUNNER point out, conditional sentences with σύν and indicative are used in the New Testament, with very few exceptions, to indicate a condition which is regarded as fulfilled, either by the speaker or someone else, and often the σύν is very close to the meaning “since.”14 This is the case here. Paul uses the conditional sentence as a method of arguing from the accepted fact of having been united with the form of his death to a similar participation in his resurrection. Here the conditional protasis has the same function as ἐὰν θυσάω in vs. a, for it also refers to what Paul believes can be taken as an accepted fact and so as a basis for argument. It is significant that Paul has not directly supported this assertion in the preceding verses. Evidently Paul expects his readers to know that they have been united with the form of Christ’s death if they know that they have been baptized into his death. Vs. e is similar. The argument starts from the fact of the crucifixion of the old man with Christ, this premise being introduced by τοῦτο γινώσκοντες, ὅτι... The argumentative context shows that this is an adversative participle of cause. It, therefore, should be translated, “Since we know this, that our old man was crucified with (Christ) ...” Τοῦτο γινώσκοντες has the same function as ἐὰν θυσάω in vs. a, but now it is clearly crucifixion with Christ which is the premise from which the argument starts. The
I Dying with Christ as the Basis of New Life

b. The Two Dominions

In order to understand what Paul means by dying and rising with Christ, we must investigate the related idea of the two dominions. The contrast between two dominions and their lords is not only basic to the whole of Rom. 6, but is also a feature of all of the passages which speak of dying with Christ as a past event. It is only by bringing out the full significance of this fact that we can understand the meaning of the motif of dying and rising with Christ for Paul.

The term "two dominions" is chosen because Paul sees man's situation as characterized by two sets of powers which "reign" or "have dominion over" men. However, we can also speak here of two "aeons." The term "aeon" is less true to the terminology of the passages discussed in this study, but it has the advantage of making clear the eschatological setting of this pattern of thought. Paul uses eschatological patterns of thought not only to refer to what is to take place in the future, but also to speak of what has taken place through Christ. The old world is characterized by the reign of certain demonic powers. But something has already happened to change this. Men have already been freed from these powers and placed under a new Lord. Paul understands this change in eschatological terms. It is a change from the old world to the new world, from the old aeon to the new aeon. It is to this change that Paul refers when he speaks of dying with Christ as a past event. The eschatological associations of dying with Christ are especially clear in Gal. 6:14 and II Cor. 5:14-17. These passages will be considered in their proper place, but it is important to have this point in mind if we are to understand the full significance of the two dominions referred to in Rom. 6.

We must now take a closer look at the variety of ways in which Paul develops his thoughts concerning the two dominions in Rom. 6. The pattern of thought which is used most extensively is that of subjection to a lord. In vs. 6 Paul speaks of serving sin as a slave. From that point on the idea of subjection to a lord dominates the chapter, appearing in various forms. In vs. 9 it is stated that death is no longer lord over Christ (κύριον). The complementary relation of κύριος and δοῦλος shows the connection of this thought with vs. 6. The same term reoccurs in vs. 14 with sin as the lord. In vs. 12 the image is varied to the extent that sin is thought of as ruling as king (βασιλεύων). To this corresponds a relation of obedience (vs. 5 and vss. 16-17) becomes specifically the obedience of slaves. In vs. 13 there is again a slight variation, for here Paul seems to be thinking of two warlords who receive the service of their soldiers. The term δοῦλος can, of course, mean simply "tools" as well as specifically "weapons," but the latter translation is preferable in the

It will be shown on pp. 32-54 that the idea of "old" and "new man" also belong to baptismal tradition.

Mark 10:28-29, in language which probably stems from the early church but is independent of Paul, brings out a connection between baptism and death and between Jesus' death and the death (or suffering?) of his disciples. This is not equivalent to dying with Christ in baptism, but it is close. On this passage see P. L. Lundeberg, "The typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne eglise," Upsala 1942, pp. 293-24. Otto Kamm, "Zur Frage einer vorpaulinischen Todestaufe," Munchener Theologische Zeitschrift 4 (1958), pp. 1-17, attempts to refute Lundeberg's position.

11 Gal. 3:2-5 brings out these eschatological associations. Note the cosmic background of the thought, the law being associated with the "elemental powers of the world," and the use of the eschatological phrase "the fullness of time." This same eschatological release from the law is the subject of Rom. 7:14 and Gal. 2:19, where Paul uses the motif of dying and rising with Christ.
other passages in which the term occurs in Paul’s letters18, and so
is to be preferred here also. Related imagery occurs in vs. 21. "Στρατώνες" are first of all the rations or wages of a soldier, though the word could be applied to compensation for other services, and ἔργα, in contrast, may refer to the special grant which a new lord sometimes made to his soldiers after coming to power19. In vs. 13 the soldiers “present themselves,” i.e., place themselves at the lord’s disposal. The same idea is applied to the slave in vss. 16 and 19. Vss. 14b and 15 are related in that being “under” law or grace also implies submission. From vs. 10 on, the image of slavery dominates the argument to the end of the chapter. In emphasizing this Paul is developing one version of the relationship indicated by all the images mentioned in this paragraph. This is especially apparent when vss. 13 and 19 are compared, for what is said in the one with reference to service as a soldier is said in the other with reference to service as a slave.

From vs. 10 on, the argument is structured in almost monotonous fashion through the parallel contrast of two lords. Of all the verses from 10 to 22, only vs. 12, which is simply the first clause of vs. 13, and vs. 21 do not show this parallel contrast. There is some variation in the names of the opposing masters. On the positive side we find grace (vss. 14-15), obedience (vs. 16), righteousness (vss. 18-20), and, especially, God (vss. 10-13 and 22-23). The references to God as ruling Lord begin and end the section which puts the two lords in contrast, and it is basically God to whom one is enslaved when enslaved to grace, obedience, and righteousness.

The description of the other lord is much more constant. Throughout the chapter, with only a few exceptions, it is sin. In vss. 18-26 sin is opposed to obedience and righteousness. There the fact that it is transgression of God’s law, disobedience of God, comes into play. But even there the importance of the idea of sin to the argument is much more constant. In the parallel contrast of two lords it appears especially clearly in vss. 10-14 and 22-23, in which sin is opposed to God. Here it is clear that sin is not merely a series of separate acts nor an abstract principle, but a demonic power, a world ruler who claims the obedience of men just as God does. This is also clear from the activities ascribed to sin throughout Rom. 5:12 to 8:23. It reigns or exercises lordship (5:21; 6:13, 14), and men are its slaves (6:6, 6:16ff.). It dwells within men and there is active, i.e., it, works, produces (κατεργάζεται — 7:17, 20). It has its own law (7:25—8:2). The cosmic scope of its power is brought out by the fact that all

18 1 Cor. 10:4 — ἶνα τίς συνετάτως: 11 Cor. 6:7 — translate “weapons of righteousness for defense and offense;” Rom. 13:12 — cp. Eph. 6:11.
as we see in Gal. 4:1-9. In such thought the "elements of the world" take on a demonic aspect and hold men in slavery.

In Rom. 6:11 Paul connects the motif of dying and rising with Christ to the idea of the two dominions. In fact, he does so even before vs. 6. It is important to recognize that the basic idea of the two dominions, which is developed in vs. 6ff., in connection with the idea of domination by a lord, is expressed by other patterns of thought as well. We must now consider these patterns of thought.

In vs. 2 we find the construction ἐπεθάνατος τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, which reoccurs in vs. 10 and 11 and is contrasted with ἐπεθανεῖ τῷ θανάτῳ. These datives are usually interpreted as datives of advantage and disadvantage. This is correct as far as it goes, but BLASS-DEBRUNNER, who also treat these constructions under the heading of "Dat. commodi et incommodi," add a remark which is important. After noting that some of Paul's constructions with this dative are very free, they remark with respect to a number of verses, including Rom. 6:10-11, that the dative expresses "mehr den Besitzer." That such an implication is present is clear from the context in Rom. 6, where sin and God, to whose advantage or disadvantage one dies or lives, are not beings of the same level as the one who dies or lives, but are slave masters who rule over men. The connection of this construction with the idea of lordship or ownership is not a peculiarity of this chapter. We also find it in Rom. 14:7-9, where it is explained that we live or die "to the Lord," and this is connected with the fact that "we are the Lord's" and that Christ "exercises lordship over both dead and living." We will note in the course of Part I that this construction occurs in all of the passages in the Pauline homologomena which refer to dying with Christ as a decisive past event, and that this dying is a dying to sin, law, and flesh, the masters which rule over the old world. This use of the dative is the most striking formal consistency of these passages. It makes clear that for Paul dying with Christ means a change of lordship. It means dying to an old master and living to a new one.

In vs. 2 we have another important construction. In the second half of the verse, where we might have expected another simple dative to follow ἐπεθάνατος, we find instead τῷ θανάτῳ. This is another way in which Paul refers to the dominion of sin, and so has a place within the idea of the two dominions which we are investigating. The importance of this phrase becomes clear when we see that the idea of living "in" sin is part of a broader Pauline pattern of expression. We find similar phrases elsewhere in connection with the contrast between the two dominions. Often it is one of the powers which rules over these dominions which is the object of the preposition. In Gal. 2:17 Paul speaks of being justified "in Christ." This stands in contrast to being justified "in law" (Gal. 3:11, 5:4; Phil. 3:6). This phrase might simply have an instrumental sense. However, Rom. 3:19 shows that it can mean something more than that. There certain people are described simply as "those in the law." This is what characterizes them. This is what determines their existence. The law is related to sin as one of the powers which holds men in bondage in the old aeon (Gal. 3:29-4:7). "Flesh" is another of these powers, and we find the phrase "in flesh" used in a similar way, especially when it is contrasted to existence "in Spirit" (Rom. 8:9, 7:5-6, cf. 2:28-29). The connection of this form of expression to Paul's idea of the two dominions is clear. The two dominions are different because they are ruled by different powers. It is the powers operative in the dominion which determine its nature, which mark it off from another dominion where other powers are operative. Such a dominion is a power field. It is the sphere in which a power is at work. Since Paul sees human existence as being determined by such powers, this existence can be characterized by speaking of it as "in sin," "in law," "in flesh," or "in Spirit."

Paul's use of the phrase "in Christ" is extensive and complex. It is clear, however, that any interpretation of this phrase must give serious attention to its close relation with the phrases discussed in the preceding paragraph, for "in Christ" also refers to action or existence as it is characterized by a particular power, the power of Christ and his saving acts. Thus, it can be used to refer to the new existence of the Christian in contrast to his previous existence in the old dominion (Rom. 8:1-2, II Cor. 5:17, cf. I Cor. 1:90). It is used in this way in Rom. 6:11 and 18, where it is attached to the second member of the contrast between the two dominions, their masters, and their rewards, and indicates that the new life is a reality in the dominion.


[29] Dying "to the Lord" in Rom. 14:8 does not mean the same thing as dying "to sin" in 6:2, for in the latter case this dying means release from subjection. Nevertheless, the dative refers to a master in both cases.

[30] In Gal. 5:25, however, the dative may have more of an instrumental sense.
determined by Christ and his saving acts. In a few passages a further nuance seems to be present. As we will see in the course of this study, Paul can express the fact that existence in the new dominion is determined by Christ and his saving acts by speaking of Christ as a corporate or inclusive person. Those in the new dominion are determined by Christ, for Christ is the new dominion. The phrase “in Christ” is open to this additional sense. Thus in Gal. 3 Paul argues that the believers are “seed of Abraham” because they are included in Christ, the one seed (3:16, 28-29). Those baptized have “put on Christ” (vs. 27). This means that the differences which divided people in the old world have been overcome, for they now form one person. “You are all one (man)” in Christ Jesus (vs. 28). Vs. 27 makes clear that the inclusive unity which the Christians enter is Christ himself, and this is what vs. 28 also wishes to say. They form one person because they are included in Christ, and the phrase “in Christ Jesus” is added just to make this fact clear. The same phrase has the same function in vs. 28. In this sentence it is not the complement of περι­γραφή, for Paul does not use the preposition ἐν to indicate the object of faith. Furthermore, the phrase “in Christ Jesus” is picked up again in vs. 28 in another sense, as we have seen. “In Christ Jesus” is added in vs. 20 to make clear that the status of Christians as sons of God is a derivative one, based on their inclusion in Christ. This is the basic thought in this passage, and in both vs. 26 and 28 the phrase “in Christ Jesus” serves to emphasize this point. We see, then, that this phrase can, on occasion, carry the idea of participation in Christ as inclusive person. In the course of Part I it will be shown that the motif of dying and rising with Christ is also connected with this idea.

In contrast to living in sin (Rom. 6:3), the believers “walk in newness, which consists in life” (vs. 4). Here the eschatological background of the contrast between the two dominions comes out. The sphere in which the believers walk is described as “newness” in contrast to the preceding oldness, i.e., the old aeon. In Rom. 7 the two dominions are again referred to in terms of “oldness” and “newness,” and we will see that the phrase “our old man” in 6:6 is also involved in this contrast of the two dominions.

30 Note the masculine εν. Something more than the simple idea of unity is expressed here. Cp. I Cor. 9:8 (μετέχων).
31 This connection is rejected in the commentaries by Pierre Bonnard, Ernest DeWitt Burton, Albert C. Oden, and Heinrich Schlier, ad loc.
32 In Rom. 3:25 ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἀνεττό modifications Ἀκοινοφρ. Eph. 1:14, 15 and Col. 1:14 are possible instances, but cf. Schlier, ibid.
33 Cf. also I Cor. 15:22, Rom. 12:5.
34 Epexegetical genitive. So also Borkamm, Ende des Gesetz, p. 38, n. 9.

The preceding section brought out the importance of the idea of the two dominions in Rom. 6 and investigated some of the patterns of thought by which Paul expresses that idea. The investigation of Paul’s use of dying and rising with Christ in Rom. 6 will carry us further into Paul’s thought on this point, for Paul connects this motif with the idea of the two dominions. In Rom. 6 Paul is not simply concerned with the two dominions, but with the decisive transfer of the believers from the one dominion to the other. The believers were enslaved to sin, but now they stand under a new master. This change has taken place through dying with Christ. The motif of dying and rising with Christ is important to Paul because it brings out this decisive transfer and connects it to the death and resurrection of Christ. Dying with Christ means dying to the powers of the old aeon and entry into a new life under a new power, as the explanatory comments added in vss. 6–7 and 9–10 to the assertions of vss. 5 and 8 make clear. And this change of lordship is bound up with the death and resurrection of Christ.

But how are we to understand this assertion that the believers have died with Christ? This direct connection between the death of Christ and a death on the part of the believers has greatly bothered the interpreters, who have attempted to understand it in various ways. Some point to a relation with the pagan mysteries. Some Roman Catholic scholars develop this relation in a positive manner and speak of the sacramental “presence” of the death and resurrection of Christ in the “cult mystery.” Other scholars speak of “passion mysticism.” Another refers to a unique possibility of contemporaneity with the salvation events by means of the removal of the barriers of time and space. Another emphasizes the present, pneumatic communion of the believer with Christ in a present “salvation event.” Others interpret Rom. 6 as a continuation of the...