

Romans 6:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Analysis

For he that is dead is freed from sin—*ho gar apothanōn dedikaiōtai apo tēs hamartias* (ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας). The perfect passive *dedikaiōtai* (has been justified/freed) is forensic language: death cancels all legal claims. This may reference Jewish teaching that death atones, but Paul transforms it: the believer's death in Christ brings complete justification from sin's demands.

The aorist participle *apothanōn* (having died) precedes the main verb, indicating death is the precondition for freedom. Sin cannot prosecute a dead person—all charges are dropped. While primarily referring to legal freedom from sin's penalty (justification), the principle extends to practical freedom from sin's power (sanctification). This is a general principle: death severs all relationships and obligations. Believers, having died with Christ, have been legally acquitted from sin's claims and freed from its enslaving power.

Historical Context

In Roman law, death ended all legal obligations—debts were cancelled, marriage dissolved, slavery terminated. Jewish thought also recognized death's finality regarding legal and religious obligations (though debating whether death atoned for sin). Paul uses this universal legal principle to establish the believer's freedom: co-death with Christ provides legal acquittal (justification) and practical liberation (sanctification) from sin's dominion. Rabbinic tradition taught 'when a man is dead he is free from the Torah and the commandments'—Paul radically reapplies this.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does viewing your death with Christ as legal acquittal from sin's claims bring assurance?
2. What 'charges' does sin still seem to bring against you, and how does your death in Christ answer them?
3. How should your legal freedom from sin's dominion affect your daily choices and battles?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	γὰρ	ἀποθανὼν	δεδικαίωται	ἀπὸ	τῆς	ἁμαρτίας
G3588	For	he that is dead	is freed	from	G3588	sin
	G1063	G599	G1344	G575		G266

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 4:1 (Sin): Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Romans 8:1 (Parallel theme): There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 7:2 (Parallel theme): For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Romans 6:8 (Parallel theme): Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Romans 7:4 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Romans 6:2 (Sin): God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

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