

Zombie Sins

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

The Inca Empire once occupied an area that is today parts of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The empire started around 1438 AD and lasted until around 1533 AD when it was conquered by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro.

The Incas worshiped the sun, which they called “Inti.” The king was considered to be the son of the sun and was called Sapa Inca, or “Child of the Sun.” As a god, the king lived in a spacious palace and was cared for by a staff of servants. Just like the Egyptian Pharaoh, the Inca Kings were living children of the sun god dwelling among the people.

Because they were living deities, these kings were already presumed to exist in a sort of supernatural state all the time. More to the point, when they died they did not really ‘die,’ but rather they simply changed form. They still lived among human beings and gods, just as they always did, but now their body couldn’t move. They were thought to be fully aware of their surroundings and ‘live’ among the people, but they did so in a different form.

One of the practical implications of this is that the dead kings never moved out of their old house. They continued to live in the old house with all their servants. The servant ‘fed’ the king, cleaned the house, accepted offerings from the common people, etc. The Inca would mummify their dead king and place him in a place of prominence in the house. Servants still brought him meals every day. People still came to the king to ask him questions.

The new king couldn’t move into the old king’s house; he still lived there. So, the new king had to build a separate house with his own servants. When that king died, the new king had to build a new house. As you can imagine, the longer the empire went on, the more of a tax burden it became to the people.

More and more houses had to be built for each new generation of king. Each generation of king had a generation of servants to support him.

With so many undead kings around, the Incas decided to throw a party. Once a year they would take the mummified bodies of the kings and carry them through the streets of the capital. They would take the 'younger' kings and present them to the 'older' kings, progressing through the generations until they reached the eldest king of them all. This process would take about a week. At the end of the week, they would return the kings to their respective homes and go back to their daily lives.

When the Spanish came into town, they forbade the Incas from engaging in these ancestor worship ceremonies. To the Incas, however, the teachings of the Spanish sounded very familiar. The Spanish Catholics had a king named Jesus. This king had lived in human form, but then died and came back to life. Even though he was once dead, the Spanish still worshiped him as God.

So, the Inca simply adapted their worship method from being a worship of their kings to a worship of Jesus. This ceremony still exists today in the Peruvian city of Cusco. Every year a festival is held called "Corpus Christi" where they take the statues of Jesus out of the church and parade him through the city. Then they take the statues of Mary and various other saints and carry them through the city as well. For a week, this festival takes place and culminates with the saints being "presented" to Jesus. At the end of the week the statues are placed back in their places and the people return to their lives.

The festival is Catholic, but the instruments they play, the costumes they wear, and the dances they dance are all Inca. If you want to know what it was like to live in Cusco in the 15th century, look no further than the Corpus Christi festival of today.

Zombies Are Coming to Get Me

The World has given a name to this. They call them Zombies. Zombies are people who were once dead, but have risen to a state where they are not dead, but not alive. The zombies are said to walk the earth seeking out the living to destroy them. The pop culture has even come up with complicated rules about the zombies and how they can be killed.

In fact, this idea of a coming zombie apocalypse is so prevalent that you can go to the sporting goods store and buy shooting targets with pictures of zombies on them. One bullet manufacturer even sells special zombie ammunition.

The reason that these zombie stories are so prevalent in our culture is because they represent a deep-seated fear that exists within us. As a culture, we are afraid that the things we've done, the things we have hidden away are going to one day rise again and try to destroy us.

Why do we feel that way? Why do we feel that there are things in our lives that we have not dealt with? That there are unresolved issues waiting for their ultimate resolution?

Because it is part of our nature to never fully get rid of things.

These old sins that you keep around, yet have been delivered from, will keep you from heaven. Like a zombie, you live in fear of those old dead sins coming back to life and chasing you down.

Israelites And Egyptians

Just like the Inca, the Egyptians considered Pharaoh to be the living sun god. Pharaoh's son was the god Horus. When his father died, the son would rise to the status of Ra. The sun god Ra was the chief among all the deities in the Egyptian pantheon. In fact, each of the plagues represented a systematic, step by step dismantling of the Egyptians structure. God started with the smallest, least important gods for Egypt and worked his way up to the top. When Pharaoh's son died in the last plague, he was not just Pharaoh's son; he was the god Horus and would have risen to the role of Ra.

Moses was not just a man talking to another man named Pharaoh; this was the God Yahweh going to battle with Ra.

Exodus 4:16 (KJV) And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Moses acted in the role of God so that the Egyptians could understand him. Pharaoh didn't speak to people directly, but rather spoke through special priests. Likewise, God set up the meeting so that Aaron would speak on behalf of Moses.

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they had to conform to the rules of their masters. But God went through and systematically destroyed the system that the Egyptians had so carefully constructed...

You worship a river god? God will turn the river to blood.

You worship a frog god? God will cover the earth with frogs.

You worship a bug god? God will cover the earth with bugs.

You worship order? God will send hail that is fire and ice mixed together.

You worship the sun? God will block out the sun with a darkness that can be felt.

At every turn, God destroyed the things that the Egyptians cherished the most; things they cherished more than Him. The Israelites witnessed the entire thing.

Lastly, came the Red Sea. The Israelites were driven to a place where it seemed that they had not hope. The Egyptian army, the most powerful military on the face of the earth, that would remain so for another thousand years, came barreling down on them. Yet God said:

Exodus 14:13 (KJV) And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

The Israelites were baptized in the waters of the Red Sea that day. They went into the waters as slaves, but came out free people. Everything that had plagued them in the past was dead. They could see the bodies of the Egyptians floating in the water. Their old lives were literally dead. And yet it was the Israelites themselves who would not allow their old life to remain dead. They kept around a little piece of that old life in Egypt in their memory and would not let it die. Sometimes that memory was for little things like onions, garlic, and leeks. But that old reminiscing soon turned into a desire for even more of the old sins.

Exodus 32:1 (KJV) And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Exodus 32:4-6 (KJV)

4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. **5** And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord. **6** And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Their sins are like the zombies that the world talks about. Except instead of their sins rising from the dead on their own, the Israelites went out and intentionally took those sins out of the grave and tried to give them life again. The tendency to pick up our old, dead sins and bring them back to life is part of our nature. That's why the world has this concept of zombies; because it's part of who we are as humans. We can't take something that God has killed on our behalf and allow it to remain dead. We are the ones who bring it back to life.

Joshua 24:14-15 (KJV)

14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. **15** And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

We usually focus on the triumphal statement from Joshua about "me and my house," but I want you to concentrate on the flip side of that scripture. Forty years and one generation after they had been delivered from Egypt, this was still a problem. Joshua had to make a rousing speech, because there were people who still didn't know who they should worship. They were still in danger of picking up

the ways of the Egyptians, or maybe the ways of the Amorites, or maybe that Yahweh guy who rescued us in the first place.

Not only that, this continued to be a problem for thousands of years, even up to the time of Ezekiel. In fact, Ezekiel 23 tells the story of two sisters, representing Israel and Judah, who are still aligned with Egypt and with Assyria.

Hosea 7:11 (KJV) Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

The problem got so bad and went on so long that God finally had to destroy Egypt altogether:

Joel 3:19 (KJV) Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

Killing the Sins

God knows that we are born into a life of sin. We are each born into our own Egypt, if you will. But he wants to deliver us from that sin. He wants to take us out of the sinful life and escort us out into His promised land.

Just like the Egyptians, God allows us to see the futility of our sins. If we are paying attention, we see our life systematically deconstructed before our eyes: just like He systematically deconstructed the gods of the Egyptians. Step by step, brick by brick, God tears apart the things we hold as more important than He. If we allow Him to, He will lead us out of that life and into a new life.

Just like the Israelites, the path out of the spiritual Egypt leads through the waters of baptism. Unlike the Israelites, however, it is not the Egyptians who die in the water; it is us.

Romans 6:3 (KJV) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

When you go into the waters of Baptism, you die. Paul tells us that just as Jesus went into the grave and came back out again, so it is that we and our sinful nature go into a watery grave and die. The version of us that comes out of the water is not our old self, but a new self. We are resurrected into a new life.

Some day we will die physically in the hope that we will also rise again with a new body physically. But before we can be resurrected, we need to be resurrected spiritually through baptism.

That's what Paul's saying when he said:

Romans 6:4-7 (KJV)

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: **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. **7** For he that is dead is freed from sin.

We should treat our baptism as our own death. The old sinful person that we used to be is dead. That person goes into the water and should stay there forever. Yet, it's that sequence with which we have trouble. Instead of leaving that old, sinful person in the grave, we dig him up. Just like the Inca and the Egyptians, we keep this old, desiccated mummy of our old selves around. What's worse is that we will not allow that old sinful self to remain dead. We turn our dead sinful self into a zombie sin in our life:

You were delivered from alcoholism, but you keep a stash of beer around for the big game.

You were delivered from drug abuse, but you keep some old Vicodin in the medicine cabinet for "emergencies."

Sins from which God has delivered you, but you (not God, not the Devil) keep bring back up. You still engage in them even after the Blood of Jesus has been applied to them.

Dead is Dead

I'm not going to go through the church and confess your sins for you. But I would ask you to evaluate your life and ask yourself, "Am I keeping any sins in my life?"

Romans 6:11-14 (KJV)

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. **13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. **14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Live the life that God's planned for you; a life that's free from the old sinful person that you used to be. Treat your old self as dead and bury it once and for all.

If you've never been in the waters of baptism, there's an opportunity today. These waters are open to anyone who wishes to kill their old sinful nature. If you've been living as a slave to the sins in your life, then you're like the Israelites in the Bible. God wants nothing more than to rescue you from that sin just like he rescued them.

Just like them, the path to righteousness leads through water. For the Israelites, it led through the Red Sea; for us, it leads through the waters of baptism in Jesus name. Just like the Israelites, that water serves as a boundary between two lives. For us, one side of that water has us as sinners; the other side has us resurrected into a new life in Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:4 (KJV) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Newness of life. We should come out of the water with a new life. Not the same old life with a fancy paper certificate, but a new life separate and unblemished. Our old life is dead; we have a new life.

Romans 6:5 (KJV) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

The only way to be resurrected into a new life at the White Throne Judgment is to be first resurrected in this life. If we're buried in Jesus name, then we shall rise in Jesus Name. If we rise in Jesus Name now, we shall rise in Jesus Name then.

If you would like to die to your sin today, let one of the ushers or the ministry staff know. I only ask that when you rise out of the water, leave you old sinful self under the water, buried forever.