

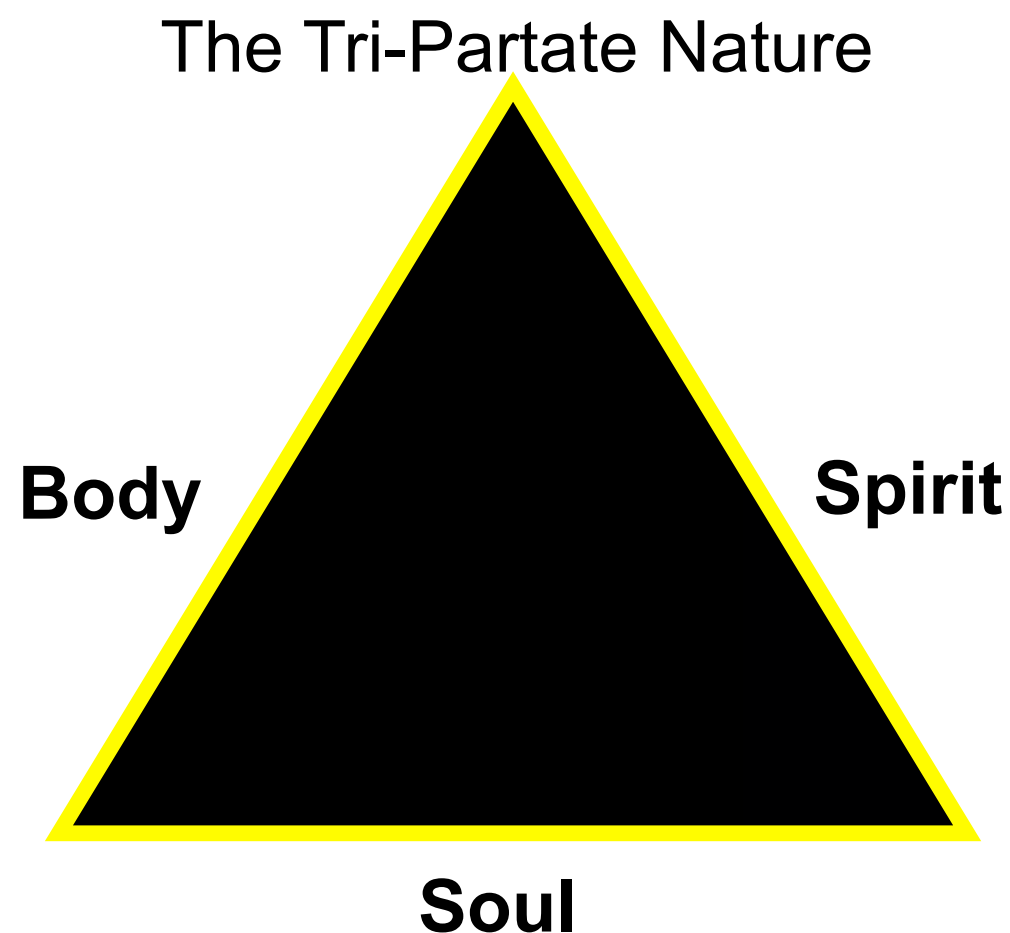
Conscience, Morality and the Spiritual Life

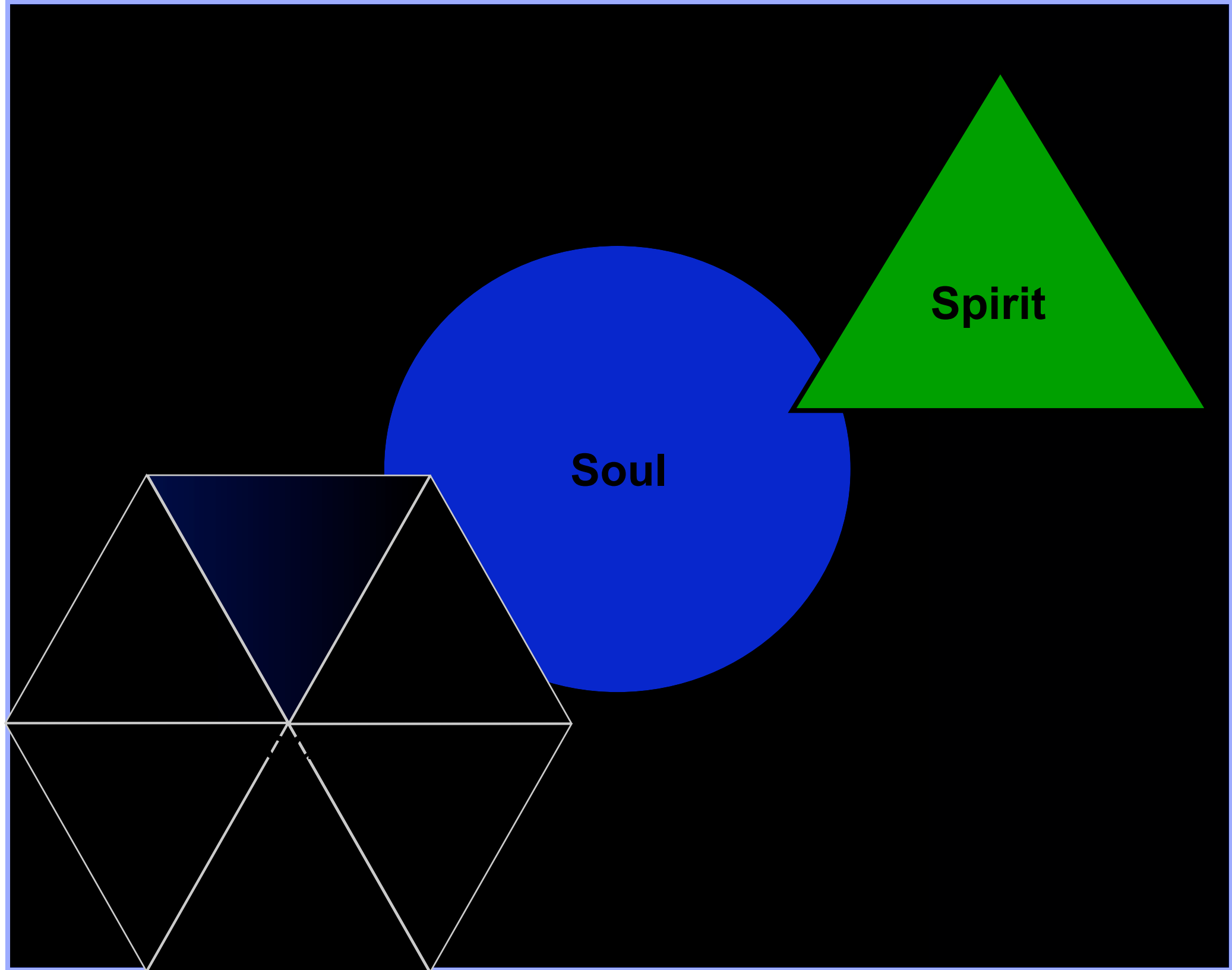
CMS-013 and 014: The Flesh

11/29/2009

1 Thessalonians 5:23

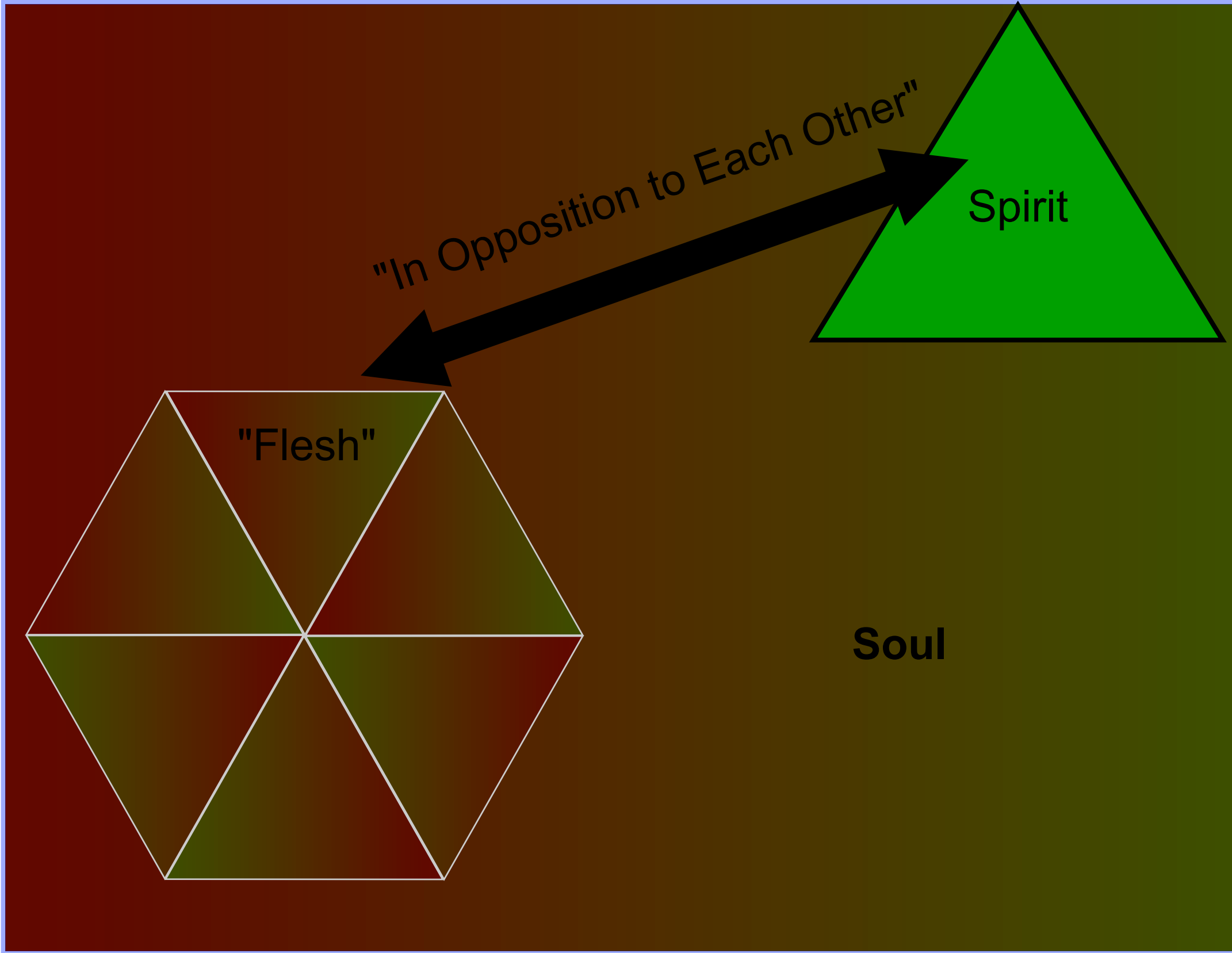
"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."



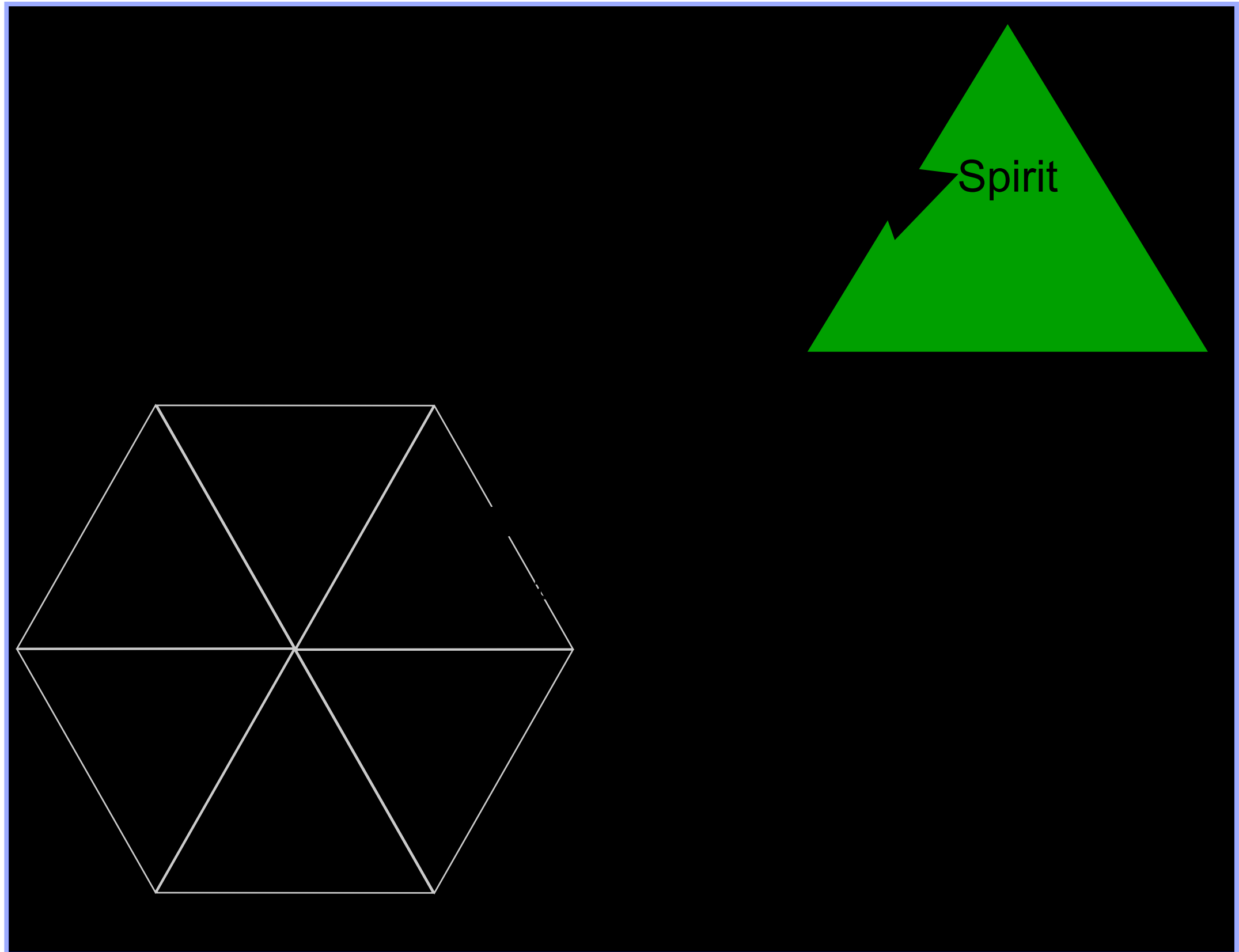


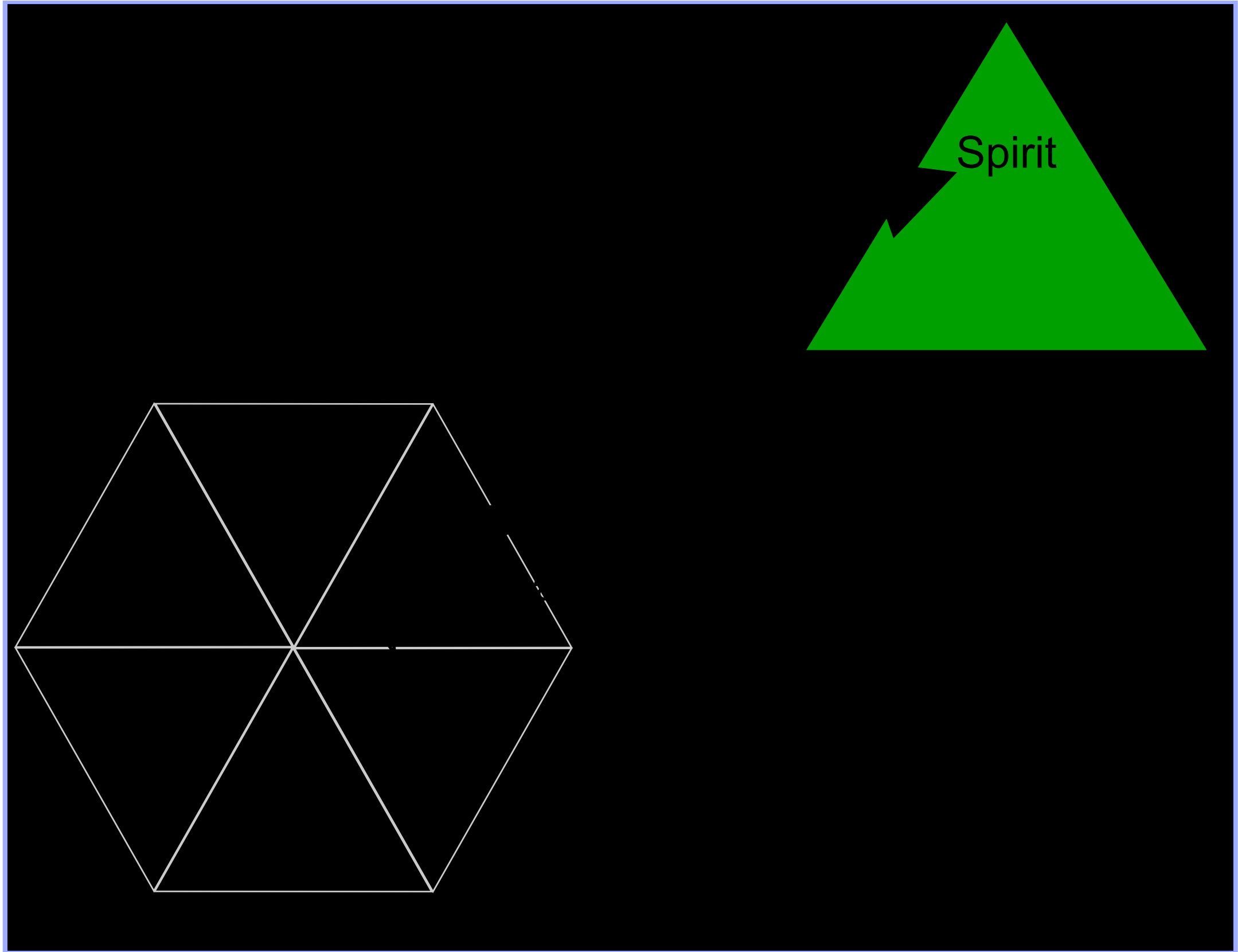
Galatians 5:17-18

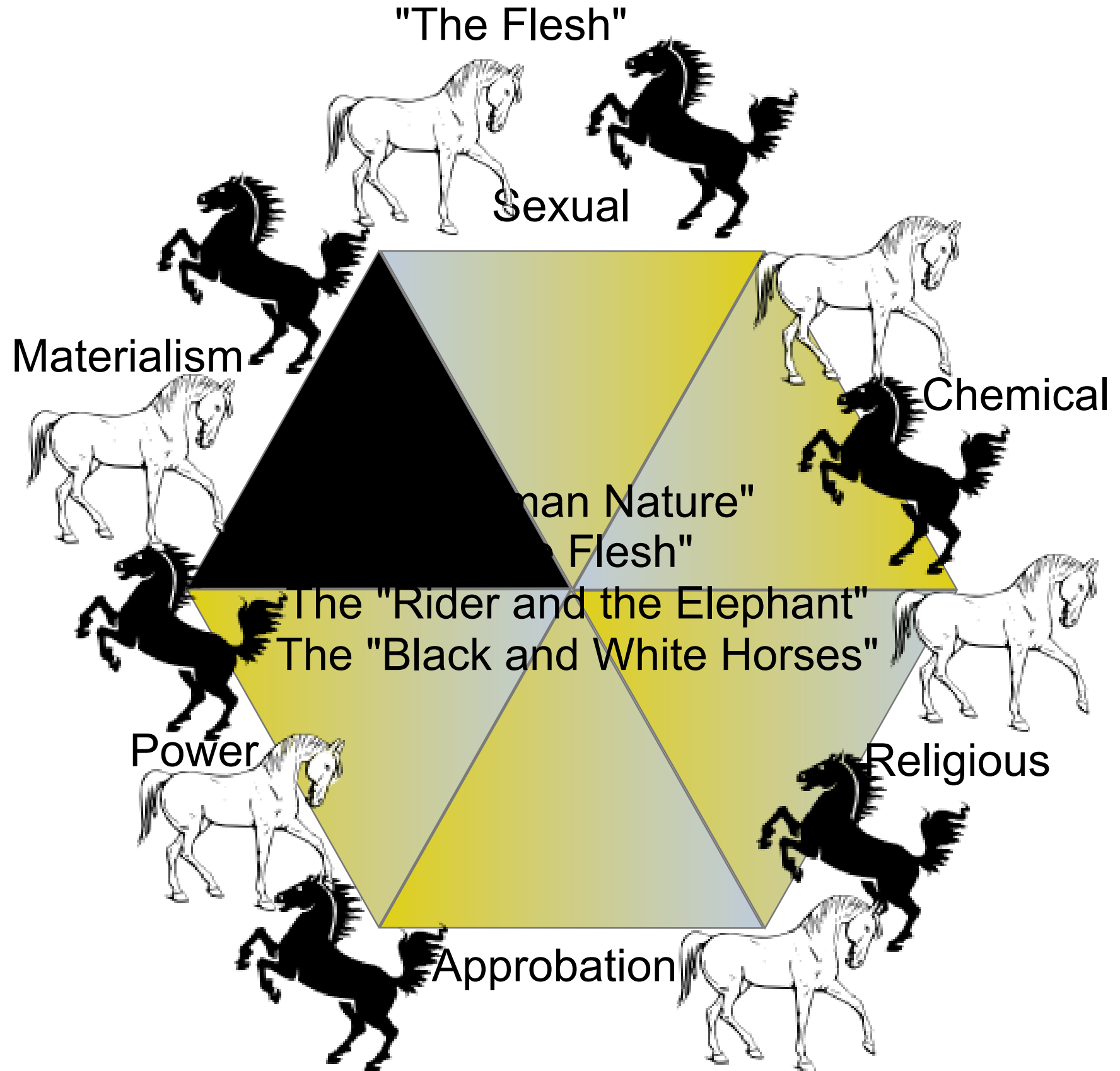
- *17 For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do.*



"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11).







- As is our customary approach to Doctrinal Orientation, we will visit the tomes of Louis Sperry Chafer for our introductory insights.
- Today's study is from his Systematic Theology:
- L.S. Chafer:
- "It has been generally recognized that the Christian is in unceasing conflict with three major foes, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- The combats with the world and the devil are waged from without, but the strife opposing the flesh operates from within.

A more extended contemplation of the doctrine of flesh is presented in Volume VI [and will be studied later this morning].

- It may be restated, however, that the Greek word σάρξ with its various forms appears in the New Testament under two general meanings.
- It, like its synonym σῶμα, may refer to no more than the physical body.
- Christ accordingly declared, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and this birth He held in distinction from that which is wrought of the Spirit (John 3:6; cf. 6:51; 1 Cor. 15:39; Eph. 5:31).
- The second and more vital meaning of this term carries with it an ethical import.

- When thus used, the word may embrace all—spirit, soul, and body—or that which is the entire being of unregenerate man.
- It includes thereby the fallen Adamic nature.
- The Apostle has written of the sin nature which is found in the flesh - "...He condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).
- The Scriptures are exceedingly clear in teaching that the flesh with its sin nature is still a living, vital part of every believer and that he will continue in possession of the flesh and its fallen nature until the body is redeemed at the coming of Christ or until he leaves this earthly frame behind in death.

- Notions are entertained that the sin nature which is in the flesh can be eradicated now by some supposed divine achievement.
- But the truth obviously remains that the world, the flesh, and the devil are never removed; they are overcome by the superior power of the Holy Spirit in response to an attitude of faith.
- Thus it may be seen that even were the sin nature eradicated the believer's three major conflicts abide, and it is not only revelation but reason that the divine method of overcoming them must be that which alone succeeds when dealing with the sin nature—which nature happens to be only an integral part of the flesh anyway: hence this nature is always to be governed by the power of God rather than eradicated.

- The essential evil character of the flesh is seen from the direct assertions of the New Testament that it is “enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7–8), that it is “contrary” to the Spirit (Gal. 5:17); of it the Apostle testified: “In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18).
- God faithfully declares that this mighty opposing factor is present in every believer, nor does He withhold the revelation that it may be held in subjection by the power of the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer to this end.
- This evil nature which is termed “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) and “sin that dwelleth in me” (cf. Rom. 7:17, 20–21, 23) has already been brought into judgment by Christ in His death.

- The judgment is set forth in Romans 6:1–10, which context has no bearing upon the great fact of salvation from the penalty of sin or upon that of the believer's justification before God (cf. Col. 2:11–12).
- In this connection the Apostle declares: “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).
-
- [Let me repeat that for supreme emphasis:]
“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24)

- The statement thus presented is not only true but becomes fundamental to any right understanding of this great theme.
- The judgment of the flesh with its lusts was achieved perfectly by Christ in His death unto the sin nature.
-
- [Christ died for your sins, and died, for you, to your sin nature.
- Hence, “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*”]

- This judgment is referred to in Romans 8:3, where the Apostle says that Christ “condemned [or, judged] sin in the flesh.”
- Paul does not imply that the flesh and its lusts were rendered inactive or destroyed...
- A judgment rather is gained against the flesh and its lusts by Christ and so the “old man’s” power may by the Spirit be disannulled for such time as victory is claimed by means of the Spirit.

- The objective is that sin (the nature) should not be served.
- This particular judgment makes it righteously possible for the indwelling Spirit to hold the sin nature in check. Were it not for this judgment of the cross, the Spirit could not thus deal with the nature, and it is equally evident that He could not dwell where an unjudged sin nature reigns.
- Deliverance from the flesh and its lusts, then, is by the Spirit on the ground of Christ's death.
-
- [Let me repeat that:]
 - "Deliverance from the flesh and its lusts, then, is by the Spirit on the ground of Christ's death." [and NOT by YOU!]

- This deliverance is assured on the fulfillment of three conditions hinging on as many verbs:
- (1) “reckon,” which means to count on the plan and provisions of God to be sufficient therefor (Rom. 6:11),
- (2) “let not,” which command points to a conflict and implies that the power of the flesh will be disannulled if this foe is fought in the way and with the resources that God has provided (Rom. 6:12), and
- (3) “yield,” which word directs the human will how to walk in the path of God’s holy ways (Rom. 6:13).

- This deliverance is assured on the fulfillment of three conditions hinging on as many verbs:
 - (1) “reckon,” which means to count on the plan and provisions of God to be sufficient therefor (Rom. 6:11),
 - (2) “let not,” which command points to a conflict and implies that the power of the flesh will be disannulled if this foe is fought in the way and with the resources that God has provided (Rom. 6:12), and
 - (3) “yield,” which word directs the human will how to walk in the path of God’s holy ways (Rom. 6:13).

- Two different “walks,” then, are possible to the believer: one “after the flesh” and one “after the Spirit.”
- The saved person is never considered to be longer within the sphere of the flesh, though he may be fleshly in conduct (Rom. 8:9).
-- Chafer, L. S. (1993). Systematic theology (7:155-157). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

“We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Here you have your Father’s Word for it that He will conform you to the image of His Son.

But, Paul said in Romans 7:18,

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

“we ... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9, 10).

. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25).

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3).

THE FLESH

- In some instances the word σάρξ, translated *flesh*, is synonymous with the word σῶμα, translated *body*; the word *flesh* is more often employed with reference to the whole of the unregenerate man—spirit, soul, and body.
- It thus assumes an ethical and psychological meaning which does not inhere in the word *body*.
- A physical body is denominated *flesh* whether dead or alive, whereas the term *flesh* in its ethical meaning includes not only the body but also that which makes it a living thing—the unseen reality which expresses and manifests itself through the body.

- A very complex situation is thus confronted wherein the living factors of human existence—spirit, soul, Adamic nature, heart, kidneys, mind, sensibility, will, and conscience—are all integral parts.
- This complexity, which in some features of it defies human analysis, has had the required treatment under Anthropology previously.
- Thus—to repeat briefly from Volume II—as a feature of the immaterial part of man is included a nature which is prone to sin.
- It is in reality the original human nature which has been injured, and as such has been reproduced throughout all succeeding generations.

- By his first sin the first man became at once a different order of being than that which he was made by creation, and the law of procreation obtained, which is to the effect that the species reproduces after its kind.
- That Adam's offspring was fallen is confirmed and demonstrated by the act of murder on the part of his first-born.
- Being derived from Adam, this fallen nature is rightfully termed *the Adamic nature*.

- Failure to recognize this nature as an unalterable and universal feature in all human existence does not change the fact, and it is the part of wisdom to acknowledge it and should be the plan of one's life to be adjusted to it.
- Four more or less common errors should be identified and avoided:
 - (1) that man is not evil by nature,
 - (2) that children are born into the world unfallen,
 - (3) that the Adamic nature may be eradicated, and
 - (4) that the Adamic nature may be controlled by the power of the human determination and will.

- Being an integral part of a human being, this evil nature cannot and will not be dismissed until the body itself in which it functions is redeemed, or until the separation between the body and the immaterial elements of soul and spirit is achieved by death.
- The Adamic nature is the dominating factor in all that enters into the flesh.
- That nature remains undiminished and unimpaired in each believer after he is saved and becomes one of the three great foes of the spiritual life.

- With the reception of the divine nature which is imparted through regeneration, the Christian becomes a complex being, possessing two natures—not, two personalities—with a corresponding complexity of life, for unless the evil nature is controlled by more than human competency it will assert itself to the dishonor of God.
- It is not within the range of human will power, even when fortified by the best resolutions, to control the Adamic nature.

- The conflict must be turned over to the indwelling Holy Spirit with constant and unrelenting faithfulness.
- To gain the victory the believer must maintain an *attitude* of faith to the end that he may be saved from the reigning power of sin, just as he was saved by an *act* of faith from the guilt and penalty of sin.
- In every aspect of the situation it is plain that one must live by faith.
- The life which a justified person should live is, because of his superior foes and because of his own impotency, an impossibility apart from the divine enablement which is realized in answer to faith.

- Salvation into safety from eternal judgment and salvation into sanctity are both a work of God. Human determination can avail no more in the one than in the other.
- The fact that the unregenerate possess a fallen nature is generally admitted.
- The misunderstanding is with regard to the Christian.
- The Bible teaching is clear, and yet some professing Christians are misled into assuming that they do not any longer possess the tendency to sin.
- This question may be discussed both from the experimental and from the Biblical standpoint.

- Experimentally, the most saintly of God's children have been conscious of the presence and power of a fallen nature.
- This may be called the normal consciousness of the devout believer.
- Such a consciousness is not an evidence of immaturity: it is rather the evidence of a true humility and clear vision of one's own heart.
- It does not imply a lack of fellowship with God occasioned by grieving of the Holy Spirit through sin.
- Who can hate sin more than the one who is *aware* of its presence and power?

- And who is in greater danger of its havoc in his spiritual life than the one who in unwarranted presumption has assumed that the disposition to sin has been removed?
- The contention that one has no disposition to sin must be based upon a shocking lack of self-knowledge respecting the motives and impulses of the heart, or, if not, such an assumption is made through failure to comprehend the true character of sin itself.
- If an individual can convince himself that sin is something different from *anything* he ever does or is inclined to do, beyond indeed anything he ever thinks, feels, or undertakes, he can doubtless convince himself that he has not sinned at all.

- If, in his own mind, one can modify the character of sin, he can, by that very process, relieve himself from the *consciousness* of sin.
- There are not a few such people in the world today. Truth of a spiritual nature cannot stand when based upon human experience.
- It must be based upon revelation.
- Sin is not what some prejudiced, misguided person *claims* it to be; it is what God has *revealed* it to be.
- Sin has been well defined, from a study of the whole testimony in the Word of God, as “any violation of, or want of conformity to, the revealed will of God.”
- It is *missing the mark*.
- But what mark?
- Surely the *divine* standard.

- The believer may ask, Have I done *all* and *only* His will with motives as pure as heaven and in the unchanging faithfulness of manner characterizing the Infinite?
- God has provided the possibility of a perfect victory; but Christians have all too often failed in its realization. If possessed with any degree of the knowledge of God and self-knowledge, they are aware that too often they are far from sinless in the eyes of God.
- The consciousness of sinfulness at times in their life has been the testimony of the most spiritual believers of all generations, as they have been enabled to see the Person of God in contrast to themselves.
- Job, the upright in heart, abhorred himself before God.
- Daniel, against whom no sin is recorded, said “My comeliness was turned in me into corruption.”

- The central passage bearing upon the truth that the believer possesses two natures and that one of these, the sin nature, cannot be governed even by the will power of a regenerate person is found in Romans 7:15–8:4; but before the passage is quoted some general introductory words are in order.
- This Scripture presents a conflict between two aspects of the ego which the believer represents.
- The word / appears in two quite different and conflicting uses, but all within the one personality of the Apostle whose experience is here recorded.

- The controversy is real, being waged as it is between two natures—the original fallen nature which is prone to evil and which for convenience may be styled *the old*, and that which in the same person answers to his saved self and which may be called *the new*.
- For the time being and for the best of reasons, the saved self is hypothetically contemplated apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- The vital question is whether a Christian, of himself and merely because he is saved, has power to contend victoriously with his sin nature.
- No more subtle or deceptive battle is possible.

- In this conflict between the saved man possessed of a new nature and his fallen nature, the saved man with his holy aims is utterly defeated.
- Being saved, now he has high and holy ideals, and yet because of his inability to realize these he becomes a “wretched man.”
- Quite in contrast to this sort of battle is the conflict described in Galatians 5:16–17, which passage reads: *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit [lit., by means of the Spirit], and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

- Here victory over the flesh is assured if it is fought in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.
- In this passage it is also disclosed that the believer's old nature and the Holy Spirit are always "contrary" the one to the other.
- These two can never by any selfdiscipline of the old nature be brought into the slightest agreement.
- What is true respecting the disagreement between the Holy Spirit and the old nature according to Galatians 5:16–17 is equally true of the disagreement between the new nature or saved self and the old nature according to the Romans passage under consideration.

- Of the two passages, it should be observed that the one records a total failure and the other a total victory, the essential and impressive difference between them being that in the one instance the limited strength of the saved self has wrought in conflict with the old nature unto total defeat and that in the other instance the Holy Spirit when followed has wrought in conflict with the old nature unto total victory.

- This record is plainly that of the experience of the Apostle Paul.
- It describes that through which he passed when with less understanding of his own self he had attempted to realize heavenly ideals in life by relying on his own strength of purpose and will.
- It would be inconsistent for those who have never striven by any means, false or true, to reach such ideals to look down with pity on one who is at least on the way to discover his own limitations and the limitless resources which are resident in the indwelling Spirit.

- Having determined that this passage records the struggle of a child of God, it is of real value to note that he, though saved, possesses a fallen nature, and his deliverance is not by eradication but by the overcoming power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2).
- From each reference to the old “I” as well as from the parallel phraseology which is found in the passage, namely, “sin [nature] that dwelleth in me” (vss. 17, 20), “In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (vs. 18), “Evil is present with me” (vs. 21), “sin which is in my members” (vs. 23), “I myself serve ... with the flesh the law of sin” (i.e., the nature—vs. 25), it is evident that the writer possessed a fallen nature.

- The portion of this passage which leads up to the question “Who shall deliver me?” as read with some comment interjected is as follows:
 - *“For that which I [because of the old nature] do I [because of the new] allow not [do not understand]: for what I [the new] would, that do I [the old] not; but what I [the new] hate, that do I [the old]. If then I [the old] do that which I [the new] would not, I consent unto the law [or, will of God for me] that it is good.*

· *Now then it is no more I [the new] that do it, but sin [the old] that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me [the old] (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I [the new] would I [the old] do not: but the evil which I [the new] would not, that I [the old] do. Now if I [the old] do that I [the new] would not, it is no more I [the new] that do it, but sin [the old] that dwelleth in me. I find then a law [a principle, not, a law of Moses], that, when I [the new] would do good, evil [the old] is present with me.*

- *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members [the old], warring against the law of my mind [the new, that delights in the law of God], and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin [the old] which is in my members.*
- *O wretched [Christian] man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

· The nature of this conflict is evident as is also the complete failure being recorded.

How to perform that which is good is a problem which every serious Christian faces, and while thousands of preachers are occupied with telling their congregations that they should be good, practically none are telling them *how* to be good.

- This failure is due to the neglect of Christian life truth in institutions where men are trained for the ministry. This neglect is not due to any want of explicit Scripture bearing upon it, or to any lack of provision on the part of God to the end that believers may be victorious in life and service.
- The great Apostle discovered what uncounted others have discovered, namely, that, when he would do good, evil—the sin nature with its disposition to sin—was present with him.
- His own efforts to realize those high ideals, which are the natural accompaniments of a regenerate estate, were ineffective.
- Thus in uttermost distress he cried, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*”

- By a gruesome, yet meaningful, figure the Apostle likens his fallen nature to a corpse lashed to him which he must carry wherever he goes.
- The answer to the problem is twofold: he will be delivered *through* the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ (7:25) and *by* the personal intervention of the Holy Spirit (8:2).
- The actual or experimental deliverance is by the Holy Spirit, but such a deliverance is made possible only through that which Christ has wrought in His death as a veritable judgment of the sin nature.
- Though considered earlier, this theme arises at the present point again and for careful examination, since it is a major factor in all Spirit-empowered living and service.

- Inasmuch as this aspect of Christ's death has constituted the central theme of the preceding chapter in the Roman letter, the Apostle is justified in building his argument upon it and that without further analysis of it.
- As before stated, the Holy Spirit, being holy, could not be free to do anything with the sin nature unless first it be judged by God and in a manner all-satisfying to Him.
- Every barrier to infinite holiness must be removed.

- In this connection it may be observed that the Holy Spirit is free to regenerate the unsaved without judgments or the infliction of a single blow, and on the ground of the truth that Christ died for the sins of the one whom the Spirit would save.
- The regenerating work of the Spirit is thus seen to be “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- In like manner, Christ having died a judgment death unto the sin nature, the Spirit is free to deliver unceasingly “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

- Christ's death unto sin, meaning the nature, is described in Romans 6:1–10 and consists in the believer's cocrucifixion, codeath, coburial, and coresurrection with Christ.
- All that the believer is, even to his sin nature, came under that substitution, which substitution has become a perfect judgmental satisfaction secured on the part of God against that nature.

· Since the entire structure of the divinely arranged plan whereby the believer may live above the power of the flesh to the glory of God is grounded absolutely and solely on the truth that Christ died unto the sin nature as an all-satisfying judgment of it, this fact becomes at once the primary issue, the gospel of deliverance, the good news respecting a finished work for the believer which in point of importance and scope of achievement is second only to that saving work of the Holy Spirit which is based on the finished work of Christ for the unsaved.

For his own sake and for the sake of others to whom he may be called to minister, the student should be aware of four immeasurable realities:

(1) that every Christian being possessed as he still is of the flesh is called upon to wage a ceaseless warfare against the old nature,

(2) that every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit and is thus equipped with power to be victorious over the flesh,

(3) that Christ has died the judgment death required against the sin nature, and

(4) that the deliverance from the power of the flesh is wrought on the principle of faith or dependence upon the Spirit rather than on the basis of any supposed resources of his own.

- I repeat:
- For his own sake and for the sake of others to whom he may be called to minister, the student should be aware of four immeasurable realities:
 - (1) that every Christian being possessed as he still is of the flesh is called upon to wage a ceaseless warfare against the old nature,
 - (2) that every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit and is thus equipped with power to be victorious over the flesh,
 - (3) that Christ has died the judgment death required against the sin nature, and
 - (4) that the deliverance from the power of the flesh is wrought on the principle of faith or dependence upon the Spirit rather than on the basis of any supposed resources of his own.

- These four truths which are so closely related are probably more misunderstood and neglected than any others within the range of Bible doctrine.
- Who, indeed, could estimate what would have been the history of believers as respects their character and faithfulness had these truths been given the elucidating emphasis that belongs to them!
- How important it is in the progress of each believer that he shall come to a right comprehension and recognition of himself, that is, of the fact and dominating force of the flesh with which he contends!

- Earlier in this volume, when examining the doctrine of the Spirit's baptism, the truth was presented that by such a baptism Christ is "put on" (cf. Gal. 3:27), and this upon the righteous ground of the sweet savor aspect of Christ's death.
- Under the present discussion the complementary truth is being contemplated, which reveals that by the death of Christ unto the judgment of the sin nature the "old man" is "put off" for Christ to be "put on."
- Experimentally, by means of the power of the Holy Spirit the believer may realize the negative aspect of the spiritual life, which means deliverance and preservation from evil; and positionally, by means of the Spirit he may realize the positive aspect of the spiritual life, which is the outliving of the inliving Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20). ["Christ in you, the hope of Glory".]

“I have been ^a crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but ^b Christ lives in me; and ¹ the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in ^c the Son of God, who ^d loved me and ^e gave Himself up for me. Gal. 2:20

- Several major passages establish the truth that the believer's flesh with its sin nature was judged by Christ in His death, and show how it was a complete substitution to the extent that the flesh with its sin nature was as perfectly dealt with as it would have been had these features been judged in the believer himself.
- In truth, since there was nothing of a sin nature in Christ which related Him to a judgment death, the only explanation of His death possible in this aspect of it makes it out a substitution for others; the souls for whom He died this death (cf. Gal. 5:24), upon believing, are reckoned by God to be wholly and eternally in possession of every value of that death. Certain passages may well be considered:

- Galatians 5:24. “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*”
- Unlike some other references in the New Testament to the death of Christ as a judgment of the sin nature residing in the believer, the tense of the verb as translated in this verse is properly represented.
- In a past and completed sense the Christian’s flesh, with its affections and lusts, was crucified when Christ was crucified.
- Far, indeed, is this removed from the idea that the believer is to attempt self-crucifixion by any means whatever; rather the great transaction is done and the responsibility resting on the Christian is to *believe* it and to *reckon* it to be true.

- Complete assurance can thus be gained that the way is also clear for the Holy Spirit to accomplish a full experimental deliverance from the reigning power of sin.
- The declaration of the passage is direct and conclusive. All that are Christ's *have* crucified the flesh.
- This is the divine achievement in and through the death of Christ.
- It is most evident that this refers to a positional rather than an experimental reality; yet how limitless is the value to the believer of the fact that the judgment is accomplished and the victory is possible!
- There need be no wonder if this fact is not generally understood and recognized.

- Even the death of Christ as the righteous basis for forgiveness and justification is slighted and misunderstood by the great mass of people; and it is probable that where a hundred have come to comprehend their dependence upon Christ's death for their salvation, there is no more than one that apprehends his dependence upon Christ's death for his sanctification as well.
- Romans 6:1–10. Though not again quoted here, this Scripture portion should be read with care considering the fact that it is a record—the most extended and exhaustive in the New Testament—of the thing Christ did in judgment of the believer's sin nature.

Romans 6:

¹ What, then, shall we say? shall we continue in the sin [nature] that the grace may abound? ²let it not be! we who died to the sin [nature]—how shall we still live in it? ³are ye ignorant that we, as many as were baptized to Christ Jesus, to his death were baptized? ⁴we were buried together, then, with him through the baptism to the death, that even as Christ was raised up out of the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we in newness of life might walk.

⁵For, if we have become planted together to the likeness of his death, so also we shall be of the rising again; ⁶this knowing, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of the sin [nature] may be made useless, for our no longer serving the sin [nature]; ⁷for he who hath died hath been set free from the sin [nature]. ⁸And if we died with Christ, we believe that we also shall live with him, ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised up out of the dead, doth no more die, death over him hath no more lordship; ¹⁰for in that he died, to the sin [nature] he died once, and in that he liveth, he liveth to God;

11 so also ye, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to the sin [nature], and living to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not then the sin [nature] reign in your mortal body, to obey it in its desires; 13 neither present ye your members instruments of unrighteousness to the sin [nature], but present yourselves to God as living out of the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God; 14 for sin over you shall not have lordship, for ye are not under law [rules], but under grace.

- The context continues on, with reference to the presence and power of the sin nature and the possible victory over it, into chapter 8.
Having in 6:1–10 declared the truth that a judgment has been gained against the sin nature, the Apostle in 6:11–23 urges the appropriation of this limitless benefit.
- In 7:1–14 he declares the merit system to be removed, so that the life now in immediate relation to Christ may actually be realized.
- In 7:15–8:2 the inability of the saved man in himself to overcome the sin nature is declared.

- The oft-repeated reference to what is described once as “sin which is in my members” indicates the presence of the sin nature in the believer: something which, though identified, is incapable of being governed by any power other than that of the indwelling Spirit.
- However, the way to victory is prepared since Christ has died unto the sin nature (8:3–13).
- The victory must be “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” but will be wrought out in experience, even a freedom from the power of sin and death, by the Spirit of Life-in-Christ-Jesus.

- In the one verse, 8:3, a most determining declaration is made.
- The verse reads: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned the sin [*nature*] in the flesh.”
- The merit system in itself is holy, just, and good. Its failure must therefore be due to the fact that it was addressed to weak flesh, which could in no wise respond to its demands.
- Since the merit system fails, as it always does, God moved in the direction of a new principle of living (8:4), namely, a walk after the Spirit or in dependence upon the Spirit.
- In such case, the whole will of God will be fulfilled *in* the believer, but never will it be fulfilled *by* the believer.

- Back of this achievement by the Spirit is the truth that, to make a new walk possible, God sent His own Son, who came not as One of sinful flesh, but in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and for sin, that is, the nature, thus to condemn, in the sense of bringing to judgment, that sin—the nature—which is in the flesh.
- Thus, as a climax at the end of so extended a Scripture bearing on the sin nature and its control, the direct statement is made that Christ brought the believer's sin nature into judgment, and on this legal and righteous ground the Holy Spirit can cause the believer to triumph to the extent of the realization of the full will of God.

Romans 8:

¹ There is, then, now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; ² for the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus did set me free from the law of the sin and of the death; ³ for what the law was not able to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, His own Son having sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, did condemn the sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

- Second only to salvation itself is this great reality of a God-honoring life and the divinely provided way in which it is to be attained.
- That the passage under consideration presents only the problem of the sin nature is obvious from the identification thereof which is repeatedly found in this portion of the Scriptures, Romans 6:1–10, and in that which follows to the end of the context, or to 8:13.
- The sins of the unsaved or the sins of the saved as such are not in view; it is a problem wholly related to the root of all—the sin nature and its judgment.

- The following expressions in this context, including 7:15–25 and 8:3, attest this: “dead to sin” (6:2), “planted [or, conjoined] together [with Him] in the likeness of his death” (6:5), “Our old man is [better, as in R.V., *was*] crucified with him” (6:6), “if we be dead with Christ” (6:8), “he died unto sin [i.e., the sin nature] once” (6:10), “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” (6:11), “Sin shall not have dominion over you” (6:14), “sin that dwelleth in me” (7:17, 20), “sin which is in my members” (7:23), “sin in the flesh” (8:3).
- In no sense is this great theme a mere command for the Christian to try to crucify his own flesh, nor is it something he is called upon to enact by use of a mere ordinance.

- When any of these untrue interpretations are put on this and other passages, it is at the expense of what is vital and valuable beyond all computation.
- The Christian is likewise, through the resurrection of Christ in the substitutionary aspect of it, brought judicially upon resurrection ground whereon death as a judgment for the sin nature is wholly past.
- This is the sublime reality asserted in Romans 6:7–10, which reads:
 - *“For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto the sin [nature] once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”*

- He that is dead, as the believer is reckoned to be in Christ's judgment death, is freed from those demands respecting the sin nature which required the penalty of death; but then one cannot have died in Christ's death without being made alive also with Him in His resurrection.
- As this judgment death of His hath no more claim over Christ, being accomplished to infinite completeness, Christ dieth no more, nor is there ever again need of such a death.

- Therefore, the grand reality emerges that, as Christ died unto the sin nature once for all, even so the one for whom it was accomplished possesses the undiminished benefit of His death to the same degree of infinity of completeness, thus to become not only one in whom the sin nature is judged and who stands freed from the penalty of such a judgment death, but one who has judicially entered the limitless sphere of Christ's resurrection life.

- This position in resurrection is as actual as either the death or the burial with Christ.
- On this new ground the believer is enjoined respecting daily life: *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ... For ye are dead [as all are for whom Christ thus died], and your life is hid with Christ in God”* (Col. 3:1–3).
- *Colossians 2:11–12. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”*

- The right understanding of this Scripture depends very largely on recognizing that the reference to Christ's circumcision is a reference to His death—a putting off of the body or substance of the flesh as a formidable hindrance to spirituality, not Christ's physical body as Paul meant earlier in Colossians 1:22, nor the believer's physical body, but an ethical circumcision in which the sin nature which is found in the flesh is judicially deposed from its rule.
- As before indicated, this, since Christ Himself had no sin nature, is a case of substitution; it is Christ's judgment death in behalf of the sin nature resident in those for whom He thus died, the same threefold undertaking as Romans 6:2–4 announced, namely, **codeath, coburial, and coresurrection.**

- The death represents the execution of the demands of infinite holiness against the sin nature and is in all instances presented as a thing wholly accomplished for the believer.
- The burial represents the disposition of the offense of the sin nature before God, as that same burial, according to 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, is also the disposition of the offense of the sins of the world.
- Similarly, Romans 6:4 declares the burial to be the judicial disposition of the offense of the sin nature, itself being secured by the union of Christ and believers which the Spirit's baptism has wrought.

- Again no command, example, or precept concerning an ordinance is incorporated into this lofty passage of Colossians 2.
- The reference to baptism is a recognition of the Spirit's baptism, which alone engenders that vital union to Christ by which the believer becomes so identified with Him that he has secured unto himself all the value of Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

- Ephesians 4:20–24; Colossians 3:8–10. *“But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ... But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”*

- The two expressions *put off* and *put on* are significant when the right form of the verb is introduced into the translation.
- Again it is allusion to that past, completed achievement of Christ in His death and resurrection.
- By that death the old man was put off (cf. Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24), and by that death and resurrection the provision was made whereby the new man might be put on.
- All of this, which is so evidently positional in character, leads with all reasonableness to the exhortations which follow immediately, asking for a God-honoring walk.

Gal 5:

24 Now those who ¹belong to ^aChrist Jesus have ^bcrucified the flesh with its passions and ^cdesires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also ¹walk ^aby the Spirit.

26 Let us not become ^aboastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

"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; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Peter 4:1-2)

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4)

It should be clear by now that the answer is "walking by means of the Spirit," so, how do we do that?

And, The Answer!

"given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4)

Why is it "The Answer"?

Note what it does NOT say:

*"given unto us exceeding great and precious
COMMANDMENTS: that by OBEYING these ye might
be partakers of the divine nature..."*

*Next Question, "How do we know when we
are doing that?"*

