

OUR SINS AND OUR SAVIOR

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Unto him that love us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Rev. 1:5-6).

A native Chinese woman who had become a Christian sought membership in the local church. As was the custom, she was required to give her testimony before the leaders of the mission. The chairman asked, "Do you believe that Jesus had sin?" She answered immediately. "Yes. He had sin." Thinking the candidate had misunderstood the question, the missionary rephrased it but received the same answer. He then asked, "Do you think I have sin?" She was a little embarrassed, but after a moment's hesitation replied, "You have no sin." Nonplussed, the man asked, "How can you believe Jesus the Son of the great God had sin, and yet you believe I am without sin?" She answered, "I believe Jesus had sin because He took mine."

At the close of an evangelistic service, a very argumentative woman was furious because she disagreed with my message. She said I was a deceiver of the people and then claimed she was not a sinner. I said, "Lady, are you telling me that from January to December you never made a mistake. You never sinned—not even once?" She replied, "That is correct, and when you say all people are sinners you mislead your listeners." I asked her scared husband if he agreed with his wife's statement, but the poor fellow was too frightened to be honest. I informed her that according to the Scriptures she was untruthful, for John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). She was very angry and shouted, "He was as wrong as you are." Her raucous voice was causing a disturbance, so I said, "Lady, will you do something for me?" She answered, "What?" "Please go away and do not return." There was a great difference between the woman in China and the one who disliked me, but I am convinced all intelligent people would know which was the wiser woman.

Our Sins... Condemning

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our

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sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us: and as for our iniquities, we know them (Isa. 59:12).

Isaiah was a prophet who recognized reality. He knew God and was aware of his own shortcomings. That he was morally and spiritually better than his contemporaries was unimportant. He had sinned against God and his own conscience. The best way to prove a case is warped is to place it alongside one that is straight. The most convincing proof that a man is a sinner is to compare him with the Savior. A person who cannot see is blind. Anyone unable to see fault in himself is in darkness.

The apostle John, describing the Day of Judgment, said: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:12-13). Unforgiven sin causes grief in this world and eternal sorrow in that which is yet to be.

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Our Sins... Considered

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:3).

When Peter addressed the crowd at the Feast of Pentecost, he made a remarkable statement. "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" (Acts 3:18). God knew what would happen when He sent His Son to earth. The crucifixion of the Savior did not surprise the Almighty. He knew from eternal ages His Son would be nailed to a cross. That He revealed this fact through all the prophets proved this thought was on His mind throughout Old Testament generations. God was continually aware of human need. The apostle John described the Lord as being "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

The gulf between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of men seemed impossible to span, but the Lord found a way to

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bridge it and make access to God possible. It is commonly believed that dialogue is better than armed aggression. When men discuss their grievances, problems are often removed. Heaven provided the first example of that important fact. The difficulty of securing redemption for undeserving sinners appeared to be insurmountable, but when the members of the Divine Family discussed the matter, they solved the problem.

Our Sins... Compelling

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sin: and in him is no sin (1 John 3:5).

Christ came into this world to manifest, to reveal, to make known, to explain the perfect will of God. Primarily, He did not come to perform all kinds of physical miracles, nor even to introduce higher and better laws. He came to take away our sins. The Lord had considered the consequences of human guilt but finally was compelled to act. Since all humans were sinners, and even the angelic world had been tainted by the fall of Lucifer, there was no one available to handle the problem of sin. Even if there had been some special person able to commence the task, he would have been unable to complete the work. Paul wrote: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). If the Savior had remained indifferent to human need, His tranquillity would have been ruined by memories. John wrote: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17). He who had been the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev, 13:8), and who had by type and prediction indicated what was to happen came to complete what had been commenced. God's magnificent plan was fulfilled at Calvary when the Savior's cry echoed around the world "Tetelestai" "It is finished."

Our Sins ... Canceled

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

The Greek word used here is *ilastos*. It is one of three used in the New Testament to teach the doctrine of the Atonement.

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The other two are estallagee and apolurposi. The Pupit Commentary states the collective interpretation suggests the idea of the "redemption of the offending party by payment of the debt." Paul also said. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:24-5)

A debt that has been canceled signifies the debtor is free from responsibility. His indebtedness no longer exists. The word propitiation that occurs three times in the New Testament (Rom. 3:25: 1 John 2:2: 1 John 4:10) expresses the idea of an offender being restored to favor. He who was far from God has been brought near by the blood of Jesus see Eph. 2:13. These Scriptures reveal the situation as it is seen by God: our record before the Almighty is without blemish. We are justified "just if we never sinned."

Our Sins... Cleansed

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3).

Without assistance from anyone. Christ did what had to be done. He purged "He washed away our sins. The earlier texts revealed how God sees us in heaven. This verse explains how He sees us O/i cart/i. We are in Christ and cleansed from sin. When the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, He said, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). John, writing to his converts, said: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12). He did not promise this would be a reward when people stand before God. Forgiveness can be received and enjoyed now.

I knew a very sincere and talented lady who was never able to accept this gracious fact. Apparently when she was a child, she did something that she regretted throughout her life. When that woman heard my wife speaking about forgiveness, she exclaimed. "Oh, no, no, no, I cannot be forgiven for what I did to my sister." She was unable to forgive herself and therefore could not

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believe her heavenly Father could forgive and forget her childhood behavior. There will be no sin in heaven, and if one blemish remained, entrance would be denied. Happy and safe is the person who can say:

Gone, gone. gone. gone.
Yes, my sins are gone.
Now my soul is free.
And in my heart's a song.
Buried in the deepest sea:
Yes, that's good enough for me.
I shall live eternally.
Praise God. my sins are gone.

Our Sins ... Conquered

Unto him that loved us, and washed (loosed us. Av) us from our sins in his own blood (Rev. 1:5).

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The Greek word translated washed is *lousanti*. and most of the translations render it loosed or freed from. It has often been said that Christ saves from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. The first was accomplished when the Lord took our sins upon Himself. The second is being perfected now by the Holy Spirit who resides within God's people. The third will be completed when the Lord takes His people to be with Himself. All of these are phases in God's redemptive plan for mankind. Nevertheless, believers continue to struggle with spiritual problems. Even Paul said, "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. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:18-19).

Christians resemble Simon Peter whose exuberant faith enabled him to walk upon the water and who began to sink the moment he ceased looking at his Lord. He might have drowned had not the Savior reached down to rescue His friend. Many depressed believers seem to spend more time sinking than looking! Nevertheless, Christ has the ability to impart the strength which alone enables people to walk on their own stormy seas!

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Our Sins... Challenged

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:3-4).

The Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body. that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:20-21).

What Christ accomplished at the cross assures us that even the last stain of sin will be removed, its power destroyed. and its effect upon redeemed souls terminated. Sin prevented Adam and Eve from remaining in the Garden of Eden. It would likewise prevent entry into God's eternal kingdom for "nothing that defileth shall enter therein." When God's children are taken to the place of many mansions, sin will never again cause problems. Even their bodies will be miraculously changed. Alas, even Christians are conscious of evil within their souls. Satan has a workshop within every believer, but this will be destroyed forever. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is." The last challenge of evil will have been overcome, and heaven will not have a single blemish.

The seven texts used in this study have certain things in common. They emphasize the fact of sin and state the only remedy for the ills of men and women is Christ and His precious blood. It is significant that the authors of the New Testament were not content to write about Jesus of Nazareth. His glorious deeds and triumphant living could only supply an example for human beings, and since men and women do not possess the ability to live as He did, the end result could only have been condemnation. When the apostles referred to the blood of Christ, they were explaining this represented the sinless life of the Lord outpoured at Calvary, The early Christians were convinced that without the death of Christ there could be no eternal life for sinners. Happy are those people who understand the cross is the gateway to the stars!

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