

Chapter Twenty-four

Pay Day Is Coming

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” (Romans 6:1).

This was the anticipated question prompted by the closing verses of Romans 5. In the fifth chapter of Romans Paul had reiterated his unchangeable conviction that salvation is by grace, plus nothing, minus nothing. He had stated it in Romans 3:28, where he writes,

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

Paul does not stop here, but he goes on to show that we are not only justified for the present, by faith in Jesus Christ, but it is forever and forever. We are justified once for all, never to come unto condemnation again. This is the message of the Gospel, of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His death the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, by bearing the curse of the Law for us on the cross. By His resurrection He proved that the penalty of death had been paid. Had one single sin remained unatoned for, Jesus would still be in the grave in Palestine, for *“the wages of sin – (one sin, one single sin) – is death.”* The resurrection, therefore, was the proof and the evidence that all sin, every sin, had been paid for, and atoned for. It is well to contemplate this simple and yet important fact. **The resurrection is the proof that all our sins were paid by Jesus Christ.** One sin would have kept Christ in the tomb forever.

Because of this, Christ has provided for us a perfect righteousness, in which we are now clothed, and we stand before God justified, - *“just as if we had never sinned.”* And this is the reason that we are eternally secure. One way to understand this is to ask our self, *“How long ago did Jesus die for your sins?”* It, of course, was long before we were even born - and long before we had ever committed a single sin. *“How many of these sins did Christ die for two thousand years ago?” “Did He die for only part of our sins, or for all of them?”* These certainly are questions for us to ponder. *“Did Jesus die only for those sins that he knew we would commit before we were saved, or also for the sins of our whole life?”* To make this concept of God’s grace - and Christ paying the price for our sins - even more personal, we need to think about this question: *“If Christ died only for the sins that He knew we would commit **before** we were saved, but not for the sins **after** we were saved, then when must Jesus die again to make atonement for these sins, that he did not atone for on the Cross?”* You see, all our sins were borne by Christ Jesus at Calvary - past, present, and future - before we were even born, and His resurrection is our proof and assurance of this fact, for *“the wages of sin is death,”* and one sin, **unatoned** for, would have kept Christ in the tomb forever.

Kept By Grace

Notice how the Apostle Paul states this assurance of our security. In Romans 5:1, Paul says we are justified by faith. Then takes care of the past and the present for us, but how about the future? Paul goes on to say:

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:8-10).

Justified by His death – Kept by His life!

Pardoned by His death – Declared righteous and just by His resurrection!

This should answer any questions concerning any sins that we commit after we are saved. Christ Jesus paid the full penalty for ALL of our sins on the Cross! And, when we accept Him as our Lord and Savior, we are **kept** by His divine life within us. Does this mean that since we are saved by grace and kept by God’s grace that we can do as we please – do whatever we want to? If we are free from the condemnation of the law, then can we become lawless? This question can be answered from the Word of God. The Bible is perfectly clear that we are saved by grace, but to say that it makes no difference how a Christian lives after he is saved, or what he does after he has been converted, is as far from the truth as anything can be. It does make a difference, and a tremendous difference. God does judge His people.

At this point of our study we need to point out that there is a difference between **condemnation** and **judgment**. There is no condemnation for the believer, but there certainly is judgment. He will have to give an account for all his deeds, words, and even his thoughts, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is a payday coming for the Christian, as well as for the unsaved, and if you think that a Christian can live as he pleases, and get away with it, then listen carefully to the teaching of God’s Word on this important subject.

Simply stated, the question is this; “What happens to a believer, a Christian, who after he is saved lives in sin and dies without repentance? It is no use evading the issue. It is a valid, important question, and it must be given a plain and definite answer. What explanation do we have? The Bible gives a clear answer, one that is often overlooked. It is the teaching of concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul in speaking of believers says in 2 Corinthians 5:10,

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Judgment Seat of Christ must not be confused with the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. It is important in our understanding God’s Word, that we are aware of the distinguish between these two – the Judgment Seat of Christ – and – the Judgment of the Great White Throne at the end of the world are separated in point of time by at least one thousand years. The Judgment Seat of Christ, (for believers), occurs before the Millennium – [Actually, the “*Bema*” Seat of Christ – meaning *rewards*]. – The Judgment of the Great While Throne, (for the wicked), occurs at the close of the

Millennium, as clearly taught in Revelation 20, where we read that it will come after “*the thousand years were finished.*”

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, before the Millennium, only believers will appear. Not a single unsaved person will be there. This is perfectly clear from every passage bearing on this important truth. It will include all the saved dead who will be resurrected at Christ’s return at the rapture of the Church, together with all the saved believers who will be living when Jesus returns to raise the believing dead. These will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and then will follow the Judgment Seat of Christ – (“*Bema*” [rewarding time]).

In sharp contrast to this, only unbelievers, only the lost, will appear at the Judgment of the Great White Throne, one thousand years later. There will be no saved ones at this judgment. There will only be those who are lost and who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. The believers at the Judgment (“*Bema*”) Seat of Christ before the thousand year reign will be judged and rewarded on the basis of their works, and given their relative position in the Kingdom on the basis of this judgment. It has to do, therefore, with rewards only, and has nothing to do whatsoever with their salvation.

In the very same way, the wicked at the Judgment of the Great White Throne will also be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:12). This again has nothing to do with determining whether they are saved or lost. That was settled once for all when they died, and the door of opportunity was shut forever. This judgment on the basis of works is to determine their relative suffering in Hell – (the degree of their punishment) – based on the record of their works, their opportunities, and the light they have rejected. Both the judgment of the saved at the Judgment Seat of Christ before the millennium, and the lost at the Great White Throne Judgment after the Millennium, will be on the basis of their works, and will determine the relative degree of rewards for the believers in the Kingdom, and the relative degree of suffering for the lost in Hell. Neither one of these judgments has anything to do with deciding the eternal destiny of the saved or the lost. That was settled for the believer by his acceptance of Christ, and for the unbeliever by his rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I’ve taken time with this Biblical concept because a proper comprehension of these basic truths determines one’s understanding of the chapters that are going to go into for our study – that is, the judgments of the believer. Keep in mind that the Judgment Seat of Christ will occur *before* the Kingdom reign of Christ on earth, while the Great White Throne Judgment will occur *after* the Kingdom reign of Christ. The Judgment Seat of Christ is for believers *only*. The Great White Throne Judgment is for unbelievers and the lost only. The Judgment Seat of Christ is to judge the believer’s works. The Great White Throne Judgment is to judge the unbeliever’s works. At the Judgment Seat of Christ the believer will receive his eternal rewards and be assigned his proper place in Christ’s Kingdom on the basis of his record in this life on earth.

There are three judgments of the believer that are revealed in the Word of God. They may be classified as *past*, *present* and *future*. The first judgment was completed on the Cross of Calvary when Jesus said, “*It is finished.*” Christ settled *the judgment for sin*.

To those who believe in Jesus Christ, God immediately imputes Christ's perfect righteousness – and they are given Christ's divine, eternal life. In the believer's position and standing they are now complete in Christ Jesus, and stand before God as though they had never sinned. The vilest, lowest and filthiest sinner, as well as the most self-righteous individual, may therefore come to the Savior and be instantly and eternally saved by faith, to receive a new life that will never die because it is the life of God Himself. For all such, Hell is *past*, and Heaven is their assured abode. Judgment (as far as condemnation is concerned) is past, for it was all passed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and God now sees no sin on the believer, because "*He hath laid on Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all*" (Isaiah 53:6).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"

(John 5:24).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2).

Note again, that salvation is all of grace, and the moment that we accept Christ as Savior the judgment upon our sin is past. God imputes to us the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ and we are "*accepted in the beloved.*"

This judgment of our sins in the person of Jesus our substituted is called "*justification.*" There is nothing in human experience with which to illustrate this act of justification. It has no counterpart in human law. No court on earth, no judge among men, no law that can be enacted, can declare a guilty man *justified*. A governor can pardon, but he cannot justify or declare guiltless. No man can die for another's sin and remove the guilt from the criminal or justify him in any sense whatsoever. There just isn't anything in human experience to even approach the meaning of justification. Only God can *justify* a sinner; declare a guilty man "*guiltless,*" pronounce an unjust man *just*; it defies human explanation.

Justification is an act of God whereby a guilty sinner is declared righteousness and just in God's sight by the imputation of God's righteousness to him on the basis of the satisfactory and completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This redemptive work of Christ consists of more than His atoning death on the cross. It includes His resurrection as well. The fact that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures cannot justify a single sinner. The death of Christ paid the penalty of sin, but it does not make the sinner righteous. The death of Christ satisfies the demands of God's Law; but if Jesus had done no more than die for our sins, we would be saved from Hell - but we would not be able to enter Heaven. Justification, therefore, that act of God that declared us not only *pardoned* but also *justified* is accomplished through the resurrection of our Lord. The death of Christ paid the penalty of sin but it is through the resurrection that the sinner is declared *righteous* and not only pardoned. Therefore he stands in the sight of God not as a pardoned sinner but as a justified saint, and is *in* Christ, before God, as though he had

never in all his life committed one single sin. This justification is an act that is for eternity and should establish the absolute security of the believer in Christ.

This of course raises the question, “*What happens if a justified believer lives in, or falls into, sin?*” Suppose a believer who has been truly justified and born-again, falls into sin and dies without confessing or repenting of that sin, how will God deal with such a person? Does grace cover it all, and will there be no judgment for such a believer? We will take this question up in our next study.

I give a word to any unsaved who may be reading this study. Your only hope is to acknowledge your sin, believe the promise of God, receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved for time and eternity. There is no other way. May God enable you to make the decision now.