

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

March 11, 2017

SINS THAT ARE PAST

Nothing changes the past. The milk is spilt; the deed is done; nothing changes that. Even God does not change the past, but he will change your future. He does this by changing what you are in the present.

What are *“sins that are past?”* These are sins that are not present sins. They are no longer a part of who you are. When the apostle Paul names the kinds of people who *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (fornicator, adulterer, covetous, thieves, etc.), he continues by saying, *“And **such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* I Corinthians 6:9-11 These people whom Paul spoke of, as children of God, were no longer doers of these sinful things. Such things had been washed from their heart and life by the blood of Jesus Christ. They were *“sins that are past.”*

A man who has consumed pornography for years cannot say that it is a past sin as long as he continues to consume pornography. A person who has cheated other people cannot say the cheating is in their past as long as they still cheat people. Neither can the man who has abused his wife in the past say that it is a past sin if he still abuses her occasionally. The truth is that as long as such things are a part of your heart or nature,

they are not past sins; they are your present condition.

Paul set the record straight concerning forgiveness of sins for those who trust in Christ. He lets us know that Christ being set forth as “*a propitiation*” declares the righteousness of God “**for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.**” Romans 3:25 It is not written in the scriptures that our sins are forgiven past, present, and future. The scripture says Christ “*...offered one sacrifice for sins for ever...*,” but it does not say he forgave your sinning forever. This passage however, Romans 3:25 tells us clearly that God forgives the sins of our past. The word “*remission*” in this verse comes from the Greek word “*paresis*” which speaks of “*praetermission*,” or “*toleration*.” “*Praetermission*” speaks of “*a passing by without taking notice*.” In simple terms, God will tolerate your past sins and not impute them to you if you will trust in his Son, Jesus Christ. It is important to note that Paul says the promised “*praetermission*” is for “*sins that are past*.” This is what we call forgiveness.

Although our modern religious philosophy denies it, forgiveness of sins is always connected in the scripture with repentance and turning from sin towards God. Consider the following passages:

*“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and **turn from their wicked ways**; then will I hear from heaven, and **will forgive their sin**, and will heal their land.”* II Chronicles 7:14

*“Let the wicked **forsake his way**, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and **let him return unto the LORD**, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*

Isaiah 55:7

*“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and **unto them that turn from transgression** in Jacob, saith the LORD.”* Isaiah 59:20

*“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore **turn yourselves, and live ye.**”* Ezekiel 18:31-

32

A person who is content to live in their sin may find a form of “Christianity,” but they will never find Christ. Yet the one who seeks to turn themselves from sin discovers that while they can often change their deeds, they cannot change the content of their heart. In truth, Christ is the only one who can truly turn a person from their iniquities.

After the lame man was healed at the gate called Beautiful, Peter told the people, *“Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, **in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.**”* Acts 3:26 Can you see that the blessing of Christ IS that **He turns us** from our iniquities? This mission of Jesus Christ to *“turn us from iniquities”* was not fulfilled through his earthly teachings because Peter says it was after Jesus was raised from the dead that He is sent to turn us.

God said through Ezekiel, *“make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die...”* Ezekiel 18:31. How can any person do such a thing? It is impossible for a person to give themselves a new heart. This is why God speaks again through Ezekiel saying, *“A new heart also **will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”*** Ezekiel 36:26-27

This is the reason Christ came. He shed his blood to sanctify us Hebrews 13:12; to make us holy in heart, life, and nature. This is not accomplished through the principles and commandments of religion, but through receiving a new heart and a new spirit by faith in Jesus Christ. When Christ changes the heart of a person, everything about them changes. It is impossible for anyone who knows Christ to continue in sin. I John 3:6 When Christ comes in, sins that were present become *“sins that are past.”* You can know by God’s word that such sins are forgiven!