

What We Believe (2): Christ Paid the Penalty

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ And just as it is destined for people to **die once**, and **after this comes judgment**,

Romans 6:23

²³ For **the wages of sin is death**, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us**.

Introduction

Consequences:

Imagine this: you want to hang a nice picture on the wall. You need a tool to do that. So, you get a hammer and a nail. You choose a spot perfect for the picture. You put the nail in and hang the picture frame. You step back to see if it looks alright. Then, you realize that you made a mistake. It was hung too low and too far to the right. You need to move the picture up a little bit and about a foot to the left. Well, what you do? You need to pull the nail out, right? After you do, though, you see a hole on the wall now. Your mistake left the hole on the wall. Next time, you say to yourself, *I need to measure twice before I put the nail on the wall*.

Folks, if the hammering of the nail on the wall is the act of sin, then the hole, the nail mark on the wall, is the consequences of our sin. We regret what we've done and later pull the nail out, yet there is still the hole in the wall. We live with the consequences of our sin. We harvest what we sow. We harvest soy beans when we planted soy beans. We harvest corn only when we planted corn. We reap what we sow. That's a spiritual law on sin and its consequences.

Content

Wages of sin: Death

The same goes with the sin: When we commit a sin either against God or against people, we always harvest the consequences of our sins. A recap of sin: anything that misses the glory of God. Anything that is displeasing to the Lord. Anything that violates God's commandments either against God or against people.

Let me say it again: there are always consequences of our sins. The Bible calls the consequences of sin 'the wages of sin,' and, that wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). In fact, God's Word explains how it came about. After Adam and Eve have sinned against God, physical death came into our lives, and ever since that affected everyone. E.g. Adam and Eve's disobedience—eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, not apple. The Bible further explains, after physical death, everyone will face judgment of God: ²⁷ *And just as it is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment* (Hebrews 9:27).

God of Justice and God of Mercy:

Let's face it. It is we who made a bad choice to sin, and therefore, it is we who should pay the consequences of sin at the final judgment, right? Actually, the Bible calls it, *the second death, the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:14). However, our God, the God of love and mercy, loves us so much that He wanted to spare us from the eternal punishment. The real question is: who's going to pay the wages of sin in our behalf?

His brilliant plan was: let someone else take care of that so that we may go free. Let someone else be the ransom for humanity. And, who was that person of God's choice? It was Jesus known as the Christ or the Messiah. E.g. Once upon a time, there was a kingdom. The king was admired and loved by his people. He was known as wise and compassionate king to all. The king had only one son. He dearly loved his son. Here's the problem. The prince had a habit of stealing. Everyone in the palace knew about it except the king, because no one dared to report to the king. One day, the prince was caught again red-handed by one of the king's servants. This time it was different, though. The servant was a new hire but a man of integrity and he wanted to stop this problem. So, he reported to the king right away. Soon the prince was summoned. The king had the prince stand at his court. The king asked the son if it was true that he stole someone's property. The prince said yes. Now, the kingdom had a law to cut off the hand of the thief. The dilemma king faced was this: to uphold the law in the land AND to spare the prince His son. Then, the king took a moment to think about it, and he made up his mind. He ordered the executioner to bring the sword in. When he did, the king placed his hand, instead of that of his son, on the table and ordered the executioner to cut his own hand. By so doing, not only the king spared his son's hand but he also upheld the law.

In the same way, God had the Messiah paid the wages of our sin once and for all (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18) by sending Christ to the cross. The wages of our sins were fully paid off on the cross through Christ's own death. On the cross, not only God's justice was upheld but God's love also was fulfilled.

Shadows in the Old Testament:

In the Old Testament, God the Father has given away plenty hints of how He was going to save the humanity from their sins. For instance, in Isaiah 53, the chapter known as 'suffering servant' chapter, God spoke about the Messiah's mission through the mouth of Prophet Isaiah. This prophecy was made hundreds of years before the Messiah was born. Listen:

"However, it was our sicknesses that He Himself bore, And our pains that He carried; Yet we ourselves assumed that He had been afflicted, Struck down by God, and humiliated. ⁵ But He was pierced for our offenses, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the wrongdoing of us all To fall on Him" (Isaiah 53:4-6).

The Book of Leviticus also shows the shadow of what Christ Jesus would do for us. He would become a sin offering on our behalf so that we would go free. E.g. In the Old Testament times, when people sinned against God and against people, they would bring to the priest a sin offering --an animal without blemish-- for their sins committed. *"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "... 'If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, ' then he is to offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering for his sin which he has committed"* (Leviticus 4:1-3). Then, the priest declares the forgiveness of sins by the death of the innocent animal and the sinner goes free.

Conclusion

Jesus the Lamb of God:

Did you know that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? (John the Baptist—John 1:29). ²⁹ *The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

By sending His own son Jesus to the cross to pay the wages of sin on our behalf, God demonstrated His love for us. The wages of our sin was forever paid off in Christ once and for all, and we go free of eternal punishment.

I would call such an act of God the greatest mystery of all: that is, to let His son die on the cross on our behalf. The sinless die for the sinful. The righteous die on behalf of sinners. Such God's ultimate love saves us despite all we have done. On the cross, God's justice and God's mercy were fully fulfilled. In Christ, we are spared from the wages of sin. In Christ, we have become the righteousness of God. I would call such love: Amazing. Marvelous. Awesome.

Let us pray.

Notes: ('Wages'—*οψωνια*---'op-saw-ni-ah'--- in Greek). *It's literal meaning is compensations, salary, for services rendered*). After we render services to sin through our iniquities, we get compensated by sin in the end. That is death.

Reference on sin.

“Sin is spoken about in the Hebrew Scriptures with six different Hebrew words.

The first three are general, speaking of any wickedness or evil.

Avel, meaning wickedness, injustice, wrong.

Rasha, wicked, cruel, evil.

Zadon, wickedness, evil, insolence, malice.

These last three involve intent, which is how God classifies sin, from Exod. 34:6-7.

Avon, translated Iniquity, for Intentional Sin. Avah is the root word of avon, simply meaning “to sin.”

Fesha, translated Transgression, for Willful Sin. Fesha comes from the root pesha, which means to sin or to rebel. Pesha is used to describe sin committed with the Intention of Angering God. Even these are erased, Isa. 43:25.

Khata-ah, translated Sin, for Unintentional Sin. Hata is the root for kahta-ah and means to sin, transgress, or miss. Hata-ah is used in Scripture for sin that is committed in carelessness or ignorance.

We can better understand how these words regarding sin were used by Jewish translators of Exodus 34:7 into Greek. See Hellenists and Septuagint elsewhere in this book.

Avon, = Greek anomia; iniquity or workers of iniquity

Fesha, = Greek adikia; injustice, unrighteousness, or wickedness

Hata-ah, = Greek amartia; failure, fault, sin.

In the New Testament amartia is the most frequently used of those words.

A fourth Greek word comes from a Hebrew idiom for sin and is used only three times in the New Testament: *astokheo*. The literal meaning is to miss the mark, which is a Hebrew expression for sin. *Stokhos* means target, mark. *Astokheo* is used only in 1 Tim. 1:6, 6:21, and 2 Tim. 2:18.

Man tends to rate sins, with some more serious than others. The closest God comes to rating sins is in Pro. 6:16. *The LORD* hates these six things, and seven are an abomination to Him: 17. a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18. a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to evil, 19. a false witness who speaks lies, and the one who sows discord among brothers.* Note that pride and arrogance, then lying are listed even before murder. God's rating system is by intent, not the specific sin." (p. 1786-1787, *One New Man Bible*, True Potential Publishing, Travelers Rest, South Carolina, 2011).