

No More Sacrifice (Part 2)

Will the sins we commit after salvation be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ? If so, how do we reconcile this with passages of Scripture such as Heb. 10:17, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"? If not, how do we explain verses such as Heb. 10:26, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"? In [Part 1](#) we gave three truths that demonstrate God judges sin in the realm of man's soul but does not judge sin in the realm of man's spirit. We continue with three more truths in this article.

Truth #4: God bestows His mercy and forgiveness upon those who fear Him

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

*11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward **them that fear him**.*

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

*13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth **them that fear him**.*

*17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon **them that fear him**, and his righteousness unto children's children;*

*18 To **such as keep his covenant**, and to **those that remember his commandments to do them**.*

Psalms 103:1-4, 8-13, 17-18 (emphasis mine)

Many have made the mistake of taking v. 12 out of context and applying it soteriologically. In other words, they say v. 12 is referring to the salvation of our spirit. But the context does not bear that out. Look carefully at the preceding verse (v. 11) and the succeeding verse (v. 13) – in fact, numerous places in this psalm. Virtually the entire chapter is about God bestowing His mercy upon **those who fear Him**, and forgiving **those who fear Him**. So this is obviously a conditional reward related to experiential sanctification, not an unconditional promise for all who are saved (i.e., positionally sanctified). These verses apply to the saving of the soul.

Now consider the implication. If God bestows His mercy and forgiveness upon those who fear Him, then what is the converse? He does not bestow His mercy and forgiveness upon those who do not fear Him. Which means that v. 12 is not a promise to all saints, but only those saints who fear Him, those who obey His commandments (v. 18).

Interestingly, the psalmist clarifies that God forgiving and forgetting and bestowing His mercy is, according to v. 2, a benefit. The word "benefits" is defined as recompense or rewards. Notice that one way God rewards those who fear Him is by forgiving and forgetting. In fact, v. 4, He "crowns" them with His lovingkindness and tender mercies. Furthermore, according to v. 17, His reward of mercy and forgiveness is eternal!

Consider one shocking conclusion of this passage. If God forgives and forgets all the transgressions of those who fear Him, and if He does so eternally, as a reward, then what does that mean for those saints who do not fear him? As a very minimum, it means God does not forget their transgressions in this life or at the Judgment Seat. Which means, of course, they will receive a negative reward. Which will probably mean they will not be included in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of Reward. They will, instead, be in the darkness outside. It may also mean they will not glow with Christ's brightness and that will be the case throughout eternity. It could mean they will not be allowed entrance into the new Jerusalem. The extent of the negative reward is not clear. But we must understand that the consequences for not fearing God as a Christian are dire.

Incidentally, what does it mean to fear God? Fearing God involves four things:

1. Having a tremendous awe or reverence for Him
2. Dreading the thought of displeasing Him
3. Hating sin as He hates it
4. Submitting self to Christ

That is what it means to fear God. The consequences are eternal for those who fear and those who do not.

Truth #5: There is no judgment for those saints who are walking in the Spirit

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:1

Of course, that begs the question: What about those saints who are walking in the flesh? Apparently, there is condemnation for them! "Wait a minute!" someone might interject, "Are you suggesting some Christians may go to hell?" Of course not!

For some reason, many Christians have been trained to think of condemnation as hell. However, the word in the Greek simply means a negative verdict – presumably, at the Judgment Seat. In fact, the verb form of the word is used

several times in the New Testament in reference to saints, as in the following verse:

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. James 5:9

Yes, even Christians can be condemned, in the sense that they can be judged. Ultimately, they can be given a negative verdict at the Bema if they persist in sinful, fleshly living.

From chapter six of Romans onward, the apostle Paul has been addressing matters of sanctification, not justification. Romans 8:1 is set in that sanctification context. I always used to essentially end the verse after the words "Christ Jesus." But it continues. There is no condemnation – no negative verdict at the Judgment Seat – for those who are in Christ and who are walking in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh.

To suggest the verse is referring to salvation (i.e., justification) is to take the position that in chapter seven Paul is describing his struggle to become a Christian. That is not correct! Paul, in chapter seven, is describing his struggle, as a believer, to get victory over sin. He could not get victory of his own self-effort, but once he depended on Christ, he obtained the victory. In that context, Romans 8:1 is saying there will not be a negative verdict for those saints who walk in the Spirit, the life of victory.

Walking is the idea of taking reiterated steps. Thus we have action in this verse, behavioral action. So we dare not relegate this to justification. Clearly, this is progressive sanctification. To be sure, there is no condemnation to believers in a soteriological sense either, for we are eternally secure, but that is not the point of this particular verse.

Now consider the implication. If there is no negative verdict for those who are walking in the Spirit, then what about those who are walking after the flesh? We must conclude there is a negative verdict for them.

Truth #6: Judgment begins at the house of God, here and now, and culminates at the Bema

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter 4:17-18

God's judgment begins at His house, with His people. What does He judge? Certainly our service for him and also our motivations – the thoughts and intents of the heart. But if we look back at the Scriptures we get a good glimpse at what God judges. He primarily judges sin!

In Exodus 32 God's redeemed people, who had been saved by the blood at the Passover, made a golden calf in direct disobedience to the second commandment. God would have killed the people, but Moses interceded and God judged by sending a plague instead. Then Jehovah showed Moses His glory while making this proclamation:

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; Exodus 34:6-7

Yes, God forgives sin, but only for those who confess their sin. He does not clear the guilty.

Think of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, priests who chose to offer incense improperly, in defiance of God's instructions. God killed them. He judged their sin.

In Numbers 14 the people of Israel listened to the discouraging, evil report of the ten spies who did not believe God about taking possession of the promised land. As a result, the nation rejected God's will and sinned through their unbelief. Moses pleaded with God to spare them, for God was about to kill them all. In fact, Moses quoted what God had said to him back in Exodus 34.

The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty ... Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy ... And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live ... all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. Numbers 14:18-23

What was the problem with the wilderness generation? Was it merely motivation? No, it was blatant behavioral sin. They repeatedly refused to believe God. They tested Him ten times, and did not hearken to His voice. What was the consequence of their sin? God killed the ten spies and consigned the remainder of that generation to wander and die in the wilderness. They were never able to enter the promised land, because of the sin of unbelief. The faithful spies Caleb and Joshua, on the other hand, were exempted from the punishment and rewarded abundantly.

King Saul was judged by God for refusing to kill all the Amalekites, as God had instructed. He lost his kingdom and died in battle because of the sin of disobedience. King David was judged by God for the sin of adultery with

Bathsheba and murdering Uriah the Hittite.

Granted, these are Old Testament examples, but we serve the same God in the New Testament era, and He describes Himself as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). Examples can also be given from the early church.

Ananias and Sapphira were judged for lying to the Holy Spirit. God instantly killed both of them. Though God doesn't typically judge so swiftly and severely, He can if He so desires. In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul admonished the church to discipline a member who was living incestuously. The church was not to tolerate his sin; rather, they were "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5)." If the man did not repent, then Satan would tear up his soul. Yes, he would be saved, but it would be so as by fire.

In 1 Corinthians 11 some who had partaken of the Lord's Supper unworthily were sickly and others had died because of God's judgment upon them. Every one of these instances of God's judgment was due to specific sin.

Furthermore, God disciplines His children, according to Heb. 12 to purge us from the sins in our life that keep us from fellowshiping with Him. The purpose of discipline is to produce in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Which implies that God disciplines us when we are not living in righteousness; when we are living in sin. Some might argue that God's discipline is not the same as His judgment. But 1 Corinthians 11:32 says "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord." In other words, chastening and judging are essentially the same, or as very minimum, judging is one form of chastening.

If God judges and disciplines us *now* for sin, why would he not do so at the Judgment Seat? The point is that He *will* do so, for those sins that remain unconfessed; sins in which we persist, presumptuous sins. Perhaps that is why the psalmist cried out:

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Psalm 19:13

We will discuss truth #7 and arrive at our conclusions in Part 3.