



Some people have suggested that all a person needs to do is sincerely reform, to do better in the future, and thus live down past shortcomings.

This is supposed to make one fit for eternal life. Will this work?

Let us assume that the manager of a business goes to his accountant and finds that his company owes \$50,000 to manufacturers and other merchants. He says, "Write letters to all those people and tell them that we are not going to trouble about the past. We have turned over new pages in our ledger, but we promise to pay 100 cents on the dollar in all future business and from now on live up to the highest standard of business integrity." The accountant would think his employer had gone mad and would refuse to put such a proposition to the creditors.

Yet thousands of otherwise sensible people are trying to get into the eternal Kingdom of God by just such a proposal, offering to meet their obligations toward God for the future, but refusing to worry about the past at all. Yet in Ecclesiastes 3:15 we read, "God requires that which is past." Even if we assume that we can somehow begin to live an absolutely perfect life-which is no better than we ought to do, but which is certainly impossible for us to do because we all do wrong at sometime.

God's holy standard demands that no past account shall be considered or settled till it has been paid to the last penny and every claim of justice met.

The murderer may cover his sin and live the life of a model citizen for ten years after his crime; but when he is discovered, man's law condemns him to death. Though he has murdered no one for ten long years, it judges him still a murderer.

To hide the past wrongs in our thoughts, words or deeds, by what seems to be an absolutely perfect life, still leaves us falling short in the sight of Him to whom the past and future are as open as the present. According to God's standard of holiness, we all have sinned; and we must bring that wrongdoing out into the open and have it dealt with righteously.

We each need someone who can clear the books. The Bible declares that Jesus Christ is the only One who could pay this penalty. We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10) Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ gave up His life in place of yours that you might go free. Our past sin is paid for; and God, against whom we had sinned, has given us His receipt showing His satisfaction with the completed work of Christ on the cross in that He raised him from the dead. Jesus Christ once crucified is now our living Saviour. He died to save us from the penalty of sin, and now he lives to deliver us from the power of all our sins (wrongdoing).

But why did Christ need to die? Could he not have saved us without that? Man had broken God's law and the penalty was death. How could Christ righteously deliver us without meeting our full penalty? Do you not see that if he paid anything less than the full price there would still be judgment for us to meet? But it is evident that because he died for us, the law we had broken can judge us no more.

If a man should murder one person, he is put to death; but if he should murder six people, he is still just put to death, because this is the utmost penalty of the law. No matter what a man's sins may be, the law knows no greater penalty than to take his life.

Therefore, it matters not though there are sins in my life that I have long since forgotten. I need not fear any of them; for I have this confidence that the Lord Jesus Christ, my substitute, suffered the utmost penalty of the law on my account, freeing me absolutely from all its claims against me, both great and small.

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