

The Life and Teachings of Jesus 15

How Jesus Redeems Believers Now And Later

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Text: Ro 3:24, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” In our series of the life and teachings of Jesus, I am dealing with what Jesus determined to do before He came to earth as a man. The title of our lesson is “How Jesus redeems believers now and later.”

Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Sin causes death. If there was no sin, there would be no death. If there was no sin, there would be no suffering and misery.

The evidence for this claim comes from the Bible. Revelation 21:3-4 says, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

There is no sin in heaven. Revelation 21:27 says, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

If there is no death, then life is forever. Those who have been miraculously purged of sin by means of the new birth have eternal life. This means having life that never ends. Such a miracle was made possible because of Jesus Christ.

He takes care of two problems that prevent us from entering heaven. Many are surprised when I tell them that Jesus had to solve two problems to make salvation possible. First, He paid for our sins. This required that He die. The wages of sin is death. What did Jesus do? He died. He did not die for himself. He died for us. He died to pay for the sin-debt of humanity. The descriptions of His torture and crucifixion are horrendous. But those descriptions are nothing compared to the magnitude of suffering He endured when His Father turned away from Him while He hung on the cross.

Second, He imputes to us His righteousness. This means we are literally made with His righteousness. Jesus referred to this as the new birth. Being born again of God is required to be qualified to enter heaven. Why? There is no sin in heaven.

In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This refers to the necessity that we be made different than we are now. We must begin from scratch.

Second Corinthians 5:21 describes what this means and how it happens, saying, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be **made** the righteousness of God in him.” God the Father made God the Son sin for us, and He made us to be righteous like Him. He became like us so we could become like Him. Miraculously, Jesus swapped places with us. Jesus was made sin like we are sinners, born in sin. We are made righteous like Him, born in righteousness.

Paul also referred to this as being imputed with the righteousness of God. In Romans 4:22, Paul wrote about Abraham’s experience, “And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” To be imputed is to be deemed and recognized as righteous. This reckoning and acknowledgement is possible in God’s eyes **only** because we are **made** righteous. In other words, you are not reckoned and imputed righteous until you are made righteous. Once you are born again, you are **certified** by God as being truly righteous.

Paul went on to say in Romans 4:23–24, “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Everyone who believes in the true of living God will be born again, made righteous and certified as righteous.

Paul wrote in Ro 5:13, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” The only righteousness that is acceptable in heaven is God’s righteousness. We do not possess that righteousness until we are born again and are made to be righteous.

Being made righteous is different from doing right. Being made righteous changes what you are. This is a change in your nature. You are recreated and built brand new from scratch. This is not a change that is forced upon you without your permission. This is a change that you desire. This is your desire because you believe God’s way is best for you, and you believe that only God can make you right. You believe God must make you righteous. It is impossible for you to make yourself righteous. There is nothing you can do to be born again or to impute yourself with His righteousness.

An unbeliever can think right, talk right, and do rights. But he cannot make himself right. Being made right requires a miracle.

This brings me to the point of discussing freewill, God, and man. First, let’s consider God’s freewill. Is it possible for God to sin? No, it is impossible. Heb 6:18 says, “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Ps 92:15 declares, “To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”

Is God righteous because He chooses to be righteous? Is God without sin because He chooses not to sin? No, He is without sin because He **is** righteous. He is by nature righteous. Righteousness is **what** He is. He is the definition of righteousness. For this reason, it is impossible for God to sin.

He chooses to do what is right because He is righteous. But saying He chooses righteousness suggests there is a choice to choose unrighteousness. However, unrighteousness is not a choice for God. It is impossible for God to choose sin. Sin is not an option. For this reason, God does not sin. It is not a choice on His part not to sin. It is impossible for Him to sin because of **what** He is. I hope the word **what** caught your attention. What is God? He is righteous. He is the bearing and orientation of righteousness. God does what is right because He is righteous.

Jas 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is **no variableness**, neither shadow of turning.” There is no variableness in God because of **what** He is. He is righteous. Unrighteousness is not an option.

Of course, Jesus said in Lu 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." And some might quote this verse and say because nothing is impossible for God, then it is possible for God to sin. They claim God does sin because He chooses not to sin. Sin therefore is an option. This is what the verse says. Believe the Bible, or not.

Of course, this claim contradicts Hebrews 6:18 saying, it is impossible for God to lie. Likewise, if God could lie, then there would be variableness in Him. But such a claim contradicts another Bible verse.

Instead of claiming that it is possible for God to lie and sin, if He so chooses to do so, which sets up a contradiction between Scriptures, it is better and correct to say that God can do anything that is right and anything that man cannot do. This meaning is true to the context of the passage in Luke 1:37 and to the context of the Bible.

Why does God not want to sin? Why does He never want to sin? Why is there no unrighteousness in God? Why is He not even tempted by sin? God does not want to sin because He is righteous. It is **what He is** that prevents Him from choosing to sin. Sin is not an option for Him.

I worked out a graph illustration many years ago to demonstrate the orientation and the choices God can make.

Jeremiah 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

With the three qualities of righteousness, judgment, and love, I set up a 3-dimensional graph. R and UR, J and UJ, L and UL. Now let's look at the possible options there are to choose from. R, J, L; R, J, UL; R, UJ, L; UR, J, L; R, UJ, UL; UR, UJ, L; UR, J, UL; and UR, UJ, UL. of the eight possible scenarios, God can only be R, J, and L. In other words, God can only be and do 1/8 of all that is possible to do. There is more God cannot do than He can do.

Aw, but there is more to the story. God may be limited to doing only what is R, J, and L. But He can do so to an infinite degree. That means it is possible for God to do as much as it is impossible for Him to do. He has an infinite stream of choices to make that He can do to an infinite magnitude.

This is a fun little exercise to show that God is not without freewill. But His choices are limited to that which is R, J, and L. There are plenty of possibilities to choose from. And with unlimited options to choose to express to an infinite degree, God is not limited in freewill or in expressing Himself.

The issue is **what you are**, not what you do. **What you are** determines what you can and cannot do. What you do, does not change what you are."

Jeremiah 13:23 says it this way, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." You are what you are born to be. You are a sinner because you were born a sinner. The problem of sin in our lives is not what we do. The problem is what we are.

This brings us to man and his freewill. The problem created between man and God is not with his freewill. The problem is about sin, both for the sin we do and for the sin we are. Sinful works, sinful thoughts, sinful words, and a sin nature are the problem. Freewill is the choice we make to indulge in sin. Our sin nature dictates the choices available to us.

Man's sin nature allows him to choose to do that which is Righteous, Justice, and Loving. He can also choose to do that which is UR, UJ, and UL. Unlike God's nature, man's nature allows him to choose to sin. For this reason, it is said that humanity has a sin nature.

Isaiah 64:6 explains, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." For all the good we might do, we still choose to do that which sin.

And as Paul explained in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." from one man, Adam, we are come. We possess the same nature as Adam. We are copies of Adam. We inherit our sin nature from Adam. We perpetuate his nature of sin.

Because we are Adam, we know what we are and what our nature is. We choose to sin because we are Adam. But notice, we do not die because Adam sinned. We die because we all choose to sin. Adam is a sinner, which means, we are sinners. The problem is what we are. What we do is a symptom of what we are.

We are prevented from entering heaven because we have a sin nature. This means we choose to sin. For this reason, we must be changed. We must be rebuilt and remade. We must be born again, but this time, of Christ, the last Adam. We must be born of Christ with His nature, His righteous nature, His sinless nature. With His nature, we are like Him in that we can only choose between options that are R, J, and L. With His nature, we are prevented from choosing sin.

Okay, having made that statement, let me address the elephant in the room. Obviously, we choose to sin even after being born again. What is the problem? Are we waiting to be saved? Are we waiting to be born again? No. The Bible says we are born again the moment we believe.

Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Joh 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

1Jo 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1Jo 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Joh 5:24 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.

What makes it possible to have eternal life the moment we believe? Eternal life is possible because Jesus pays for our sins and then miraculously changes our nature. But this immediate change takes place in the inward man spiritually, not in the outward man in the flesh.

Romans 7:22, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." First John 3:9 drives home the significance of this inward change saying, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." That which is born again is the inward man. The inward man is changed instantly the moment you believe. The inward man is instantly made righteous, imputed with righteousness, and cannot sin. If you cannot sin, you cannot die. This change from being unrighteous to being righteous is of profound importance. This change is the foundation for eternal life.

The born-again inward spirit does not sin. The born-again inward man will never die. The born-again inward man has eternal life. Eternal life begins the moment you believe. You do not wait to start eternal life.

However, the body is waiting to be changed. It is not born-again the moment we believe.

Paul explains in Romans 7:18, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

In Romans 8:10–11, Paul wrote, “And if Christ be in you, **the body is dead** because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” The body, the outward man is dead due to sin. The inward spirit is alive due to righteousness. Christians have a dual nature. And this tension, this warfare between the sin nature of the body and the righteous nature of the spirit, produces the hope for complete redemption when the body is finally changed and made righteous as well.

Paul wrote of this event in Romans 8:23, saying, “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

What a day that will be when our redemption is made complete, when our bodies are born-again and made brand new with a righteous nature, the righteousness of God.

As believers in this life, we live in security with hope. We are secure in His righteousness. We hope in His promise for complete redemption. And with security and hope, we can live testimonies that speak to both security in Christ and hope in Christ.

Amen.

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