



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

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“What Happens To Our Sins When They Are Forgiven?”

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The blood of Jesus washes away sin (Rev. 1:5). This is a simple but profound truth rooted in Scripture. Yet, when our sins are washed away, what happens to them? Where do they go?

The Scriptures teach much about the *disappearance* of our sins. For instance, the apostle John recorded, “[y]ou know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). John the Baptist, announced, “[b]ehold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)!

God spoke, of the nation of Israel, “...and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins” (Rom. 11:27). Further, Jeremiah the prophet prophesied concerning the new covenant, “...[f]or I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (31:34). Surely, to “take away their sins” is equal to “remember their sin no more.” This is especially true when “take away” in all the passages above are defined from the Greek as, “to carry (away), to carry off, to remove...” (Louw-Nida - Greek-English Lexicon of the NT)

The Psalmist wrote, “[b]lessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity...” (Psalm 32:1-2). According to David, for one’s transgressions to be forgiven, was equal to one’s sins being covered. This same person would have no iniquities counted to him or her.

Speaking of the better blood offered by Christ, the Hebrew writer argued, “[f]or it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” and “...every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins” (10:4, 11). The precious unblemished blood of Jesus was sufficient enough to take away the sins of the world, when the blood of bulls and goats could not. Earlier the writer stated, “...he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

Peter put an interesting spin on what happens to our sins when we are forgiven, he declared, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness...” (1 Peter 2:24). It should be observed that when Peter says our sins are borne in his body that this isn’t a literal bearing of sin in the body, rather Peter uses figurative speech. Notice too above, that John affirmed, “...and in him there is no sin.”

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What I mean is, to bear something does not of necessity mean to possess that which is borne. For instance, in Matt. 8.16-17 we read, “[t]hat evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.” Isaiah said it thusly, “[s]urely he has borne (Hebrew word *nasa'* means take away – BG) our griefs and carried our sorrows” (53.4). Matthew said that what Christ did was in fulfillment of Isaiah. Yet, when Christ bore their diseases did He become said diseases or even possess them? When He casted out the spirits of others, did the spirits then possess Him? Certainly not! Therefore, when Peter says Christ “bore our sins in His body,” he does not mean our literal sins were placed in His body or that Jesus possessed them. Further, the Greek for “bore our diseases” is defined by Greek authorities as “to bear away” (Thayer) or “remove” (Louw-Nida). Interestingly, the NLT translates this verse, “He took our sicknesses and removed our diseases.”

What then does Peter mean? He means that Christ took away or removed our sins! Notice, “...so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many...” (Heb. 9.28, emphasis mine). The word “bear” (*anapherō*) in Heb. 9.28 is the same Greek word as “bore” in 1 Peter 2.24. One of the meanings rendered by Thayer's Greek Lexicon is, “to put upon the altar, to bring to the altar, to offer.” The Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament says of *anapherō*, “figuratively, of Christ's taking sins on himself in order to atone for them bear, take away.” Interestingly, Heb. 9.26 reads, “...he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (emphasis mine). The Hebrew writer states our sins were “put away.” Therefore, Heb. 9.26 is divine commentary on 9.28! Jesus “bore” our sins in that He took them away by the sacrifice of Himself!

Clearly one can see that our sins are taken away! We've established this truth countless times in this article. But where do they go? The psalmist figuratively declared, “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103.12). Again, we figuratively read, “He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7.19). God foretold, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more...” (Jeremiah 31.34).

It is obvious that our sins are completely gone, taken way, remembered no more and as the Psalmist put it, covered! Paul said it this way, God, “...passed over former sins” (Rom. 3.25). We should praise God that He sent His Son to be an atoning sacrifice for us. That is, in the death of Christ we can have a covering for sin (see Rom. 3.25; Heb. 2.17; 1 John 2.133; 4.10).

Since our sins are taken away by the blood of Jesus, I encourage all reading this to make sure your sins have been covered and remembered no more. But how, or better yet, when does such a thing occur? I leave you with the words of Ananias, “[a]nd now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22.16, emphasis mine). BG