

In search of...



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No Condemnation

"1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be

fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rm.8:1-4, NKJV).

This text clearly says that there is "no condemnation" in Christ! What fantastic news to any human being who struggles with sin, and the desire to be right before God! However, despite the good news revealed here, I believe this passage is grossly misunderstood by a great many

sincere religious people. Most of our denominational friends believe in and espouse the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved.” In their minds, the phrase, “no condemnation,” means “no condemnation – under any circumstance, no matter what we do or fail to do.” And that is simply false! Let’s consider Paul’s words here in context, so that we can fully understand and appreciate what is being said.

First, Paul clearly says that this state of “no condemnation” only applies “to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rm.8:1). This means that we need to be able to distinguish those “in Christ” from those who are not – for this statement only applies to those in Him. Back in chapter six, we learn that we enter “into Christ” by means of baptism: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” (6:3) According to Paul, we “died to sins” (repentance, 6:2), were “buried with Him through baptism” (immersion, 6:4), and just like our Lord, were raised to “walk in newness of life” (6:4). Therefore, only those who have been baptized are “in Christ” (Rm.6:3; Ga.3:26-27).

Second, Paul also says that those who are in Christ “do not walk according to the flesh,

but according to the Spirit” (Rm.8:1). To be fair, some translations omit that phrase from verse 1; but the identical phrase is found again in verse 4. This means it’s a true statement whether it belongs in verse one or not. It also means that the way we live (walk) matters! I get so tired of hearing false teachers proudly proclaim that it does not matter whether we obey God or not – **BECAUSE IT DOES MATTER!** A place called “Hell” is reserved for the disobedient (Rv.21:8), just as Heaven is for the obedient (Rv.22:14).

Next, Paul tells us exactly how it is possible for there to be “no condemnation” in Christ (Rm.8:2-4). Before we note how this is possible, it’s important to notice the “three laws” mentioned in this text: First, “the law of the Spirit” which sets us “free from the law of sin and death” (v.2a) is simply the gospel – “for it is the power of God to salvation” (cf. Rm.1:16). Second, “the law of sin and death” (v.2b) is a reference to the “control” that sin has over us apart from Christ (cf. Rm.7:23-24). Third, “the law” which “was weak through the flesh” is the Law of Moses (cf. Rm.7:4-7).

In a nutshell, Paul is saying that the gospel has set us free from the control of sin –

which is something that the Law of Moses could not do (Rm.8:2-3). You see, the Law of Moses made no actual provision for sin (Hb.10:4). Therefore, the only way to be justified by that law was to keep it perfectly (cf. Ga.3:10) – something which no man (other than Christ) can do. This is why the Law of Moses is said to be “weak through the flesh.”

“But what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did” (Rm.8:3). God provided something in the gospel that had not been provided before. You see, the gospel is not “just” another law to keep (though it contains law, Ga.6:2). On the contrary, it has a provision for sin built into it! What “God did” was to send “His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (i.e., as a human being, cf. Jn.1:1, 14; 1Tm.3:16). Further, He sent Him “on account of sin” (NKJV), “for sin” (KJV), or perhaps more accurately, “as an offering for sin” (NASV). And by that sin-offering, Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rm.8:3). His physical death was a sacrifice offered as the ransom price for the sins of mankind (1Tm.2:5-6).

Finally, why did God send His Son to die for our sins? “That the righteous requirement of the law might be

fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rm.8:4). With a sufficient offering for sin given, the law can be fulfilled by those who are faithful to walk according to the Spirit. For even though we may fail from time to time, there is a constant provision for sin (1Jn.1:5-10). On the basis of Jesus’ death, God forgives those who “walk” faithfully, constantly striving to please Him. And through these two prongs of “faithfulness” and “forgiveness,” we are able to fulfill “the righteous requirement of the law.”

What blessed news! No wonder there is “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!” God has done His part (sending Jesus); and if we do our part, salvation is assured! Why would anyone turn that kind of an offer down? If we can help you to obey the gospel, please let us know!

Lanny Smith

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- The sin of Judah was written with the point of a D_____ (Jer. 17:1)
- Daniel had a vision of one with a body like B_____ (Dan. 10:6)
- New Jerusalem's wall was of J_____ (Rev. 21:18)
- The T_____ of Ethiopia shall not equal wisdom (Job 28:19)
- A_____ was part of Ezekiel's prophetic visions (Ezek. 1:27)
- A virtuous woman is for more valuable than a R_____ (Prov. 31:10)
- Syria traded heavily, including with E_____ (Ezek. 27:16)
- One of the stones in John's vision was S_____ (Rev. 21:20)
- God said He would make windows of A_____ (Isa. 54:12)
- Jesus told a parable about a P_____ of great price (Matt. 13:46)
- The afflicted shall have foundations of S_____ (Isa. 54:11)