

Believer's Blessings (part 2)

Romans 5:1—10

When studying through Romans chapter five, we stand face-to-face with many spiritual blessings given to the believer. We have already seen that a believer is no longer an enemy of God, we now can enjoy God's declaration of peace. This is because of Jesus Christ's work of reconciliation at the cross. He reconciled the world to the Father, and at the same time He was a propitiation, a payment made to appease the Father's wrath against sinners. This is why He is called our Redeemer. He is the bridge between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5), paying the price of redemption. This price of redemption was too great for any man to pay, it had to be paid by God Himself through the person of Jesus Christ.

There are some who understand that Jesus paid the price of redemption to Satan. Going back to the Garden of Eden, when Adam fell, they say that mankind was put under Satan's control. They use John 8:44 to show that Satan is the father of the unsaved. Since Christ had to purchase our redemption through His death on the cross (Ephesians 1:7), and since, they reason, we once belonged to Satan, Satan was the one who had to be paid off to purchase us from him.

Their mistake comes from using bad translations of the Bible and/or misunderstanding a limited number of verses. A few newer translations (including the popular NIV) interpret John 8:44 to say that these Pharisees belonged (Greek: *ek*) to their father, the devil. The Greek word *ek* does not show ownership, it shows that they have come out of Satan. They were like Satan, acting like Satan, had similar motives to Satan, and therefore they are compared to children of Satan.

When Jesus Christ paid the penalty and ransomed us, He paid the price to the Father. This is made clear in 1 Timothy 2:5—6 which states, “⁵ For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” Jesus Christ bridges the chasm between man and God. He paid the price of redemption to appease God's anger against us.

Saved from wrath (verse 9)

Not only do we have a peace with God, and a firm and absolute hope of our future, we also are guaranteed to be saved from wrath. Most people understand this wrath to be hell; God's eternal wrath against those who reject His offer of salvation. This wrath can be found in John 3:36 which shows that the wrath of God will abide on the person who does not believe on the Son. This would be an eternal wrath.

However, there are other verses that speak of God's wrath not related to eternal damnation. For instance, Romans 1:18 states, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” This wrath, however, is not specifically about the Lake of Fire, for His wrath is right now being revealed to unbelievers through what is written in Scripture. But, there is another type of wrath that Scripture speaks of in Romans 5:9.

This wrath, I believe, is focused on the wrath of God being poured out during the seven-year Tribulation. This period of time is also referred to as the wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9), and this is what Romans 5:10 is all about. We can make this conclusion by reading this verse very carefully. Notice that Paul says that we **SHALL BE** saved from wrath. This is an event in the future. However, we are already saved from eternal damnation at the point of salvation when we were given everlasting life. If Romans 5:10 is not about hell, then it makes sense that Paul is speaking of the wrath of the Tribulation. This fits in

perfectly with 1 Thessalonians 5:9 which tells us that we are not appointed to wrath and 1 Thessalonians 1:10 where Paul says we have been delivered from the wrath to come.

Israel, both saved and unsaved individuals, will be going through the seven-year Tribulation. We see this in Luke 21:23 where Israel is warned that there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people. This is God's wrath being poured out on Israel to discipline and cleanse her (Malachi 3:2—3; Zechariah 13:9), and upon the world for punishment (Nahum 1:7; Acts 17:31; Jeremiah 30:7, 11).

Unfortunately, most people have already eliminated the correct viewpoint of what this wrath is, so they needed to come up with another answer. The vast majority think hell is in view here because they have rejected the idea of a Tribulation and a Rapture. They agree there will be tribulation, but have rejected that there will be a special seven-year Tribulation. They have rejected the prophecy given to us by Daniel which clearly leaves one more week of years when God will deal with Israel and fulfill prophecy. They are like those in 2 Peter 3:4 who are asking "Where is the promise of His coming?" then proceed to come up with their own idea to explain the two thousand year gap preceding the coming tribulation. They don't understand this gap because they don't accept Paul's teaching about this Dispensation of Grace. Instead of studying what Paul has to say about the Mystery, the Body of Christ, and the Rapture, they study books written to Israel (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and most of the Old Testament) and try to fit Paul's Mystery program into Israel's Prophetic program. Even worse, many rely upon the so-called church fathers to define and/or support what they believe instead of building their foundation upon Scripture. They end up interpreting Scripture based on creeds and human writings.

The wrath of the Tribulation is a condemning and cleansing wrath. We will never experience God's wrath, in this life or the next. There is no reason for the Church, the Body of Christ, to go through the seven-year tribulation because we already stand perfect in Christ. We will never experience His condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Saved by His life (verse 10)

Being in a completely hopeless state, Christ died on our behalf, the righteous for the unrighteous. Even when we were enemies of God, and wanting absolutely nothing to do with Him, Christ died for us. His death was God's way to appease His anger toward sinful men. This appeasement is called propitiation. This picture of propitiation is demonstrated in Genesis 32. Jacob had tricked Esau out of his inheritance and then decided it would be best to disappear. Twenty years have elapsed, and Jacob now wants to reconcile with his brother. He sent word to Esau that he would like to mend their broken relationship, and Jacob's servants came back to him saying his brother is on the way to meet him, along with 400 men. Jacob greatly fears for his life, thinking Esau wants revenge. Jacob gets ready for war, and then to appease his anger, Jacob sends Esau wave after wave of goats, sheep, rams, camels, bulls and donkeys. This is a picture of propitiation. In a similar fashion, Jesus Christ was the gift used to appease the Father's wrath against us.

All of this was done with the agreement of the Father and the Son before the world began (Ephesians 1:4). We were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1—5; Colossians 2:13) and the only way for us to be given life was through the death of Jesus Christ. However, if Christ had not been resurrected, we would have no hope. He was nailed to the cross because of our sins, but was raised up for our justification (Romans 4:25). God's power was able to raise Him from the dead (Romans 1:4), and His resurrection is proof that He can do the same for us. His resurrected life gives every believer the hope of eternal life.

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