

SECURE IN CHRIST

by
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LIFE OF GOD

The Christian Scriptures are a message of life. Jesus is introduced therein as *“the way, the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6). He came that men might *“have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). Those who believe in Him have *“everlasting life”* while those who do not trust Him *“shall not see life”* (John 3:36). Efforts to obey law-principles for righteousness end in death. Personal faith in Jesus Christ to make one righteous issues in life abundant and everlasting.

But what does the Bible teach about this life which is received by faith in Jesus Christ? Let us review Holy Scripture and find an answer to that question.

Received by a new birth

Eternal life is received by the experience of a birth. Your physical life began upon your physical birth. In like manner your spiritual life begins when you experience a spiritual birth.

The third chapter of the Gospel according to John reports Jesus’ conversation with a man named Nicodemus. Jesus told him, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of*

God.” Nicodemus thought in terms of a second physical birth and asked, “*How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?*” Jesus explained, “*Except a man be born of water (the physical birth) and of the Spirit (the spiritual birth), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*”

Nicodemus’ hope in God was based on two things. The first was that he had been born physically as a part of a nation called “the chosen people of God.” The second was that he had been diligent in keeping the religious laws of his faith. He was making a tragic mistake, though he did not know it. Spiritual life is not received by physical birth. Only a spiritual birth can give spiritual life. That is why Jesus said, “*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*”

Do you ask, “*How is one born again?*” The answer of God is found in John 1:11-13, which reads, “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” Examine that passage carefully.

To be born spiritually, to be born of God, does not come by physical birth (of blood), nor from fleshly passion (of the will of the flesh), nor by human preference (of the will of man), but it comes from God. The second birth is God’s act. It is something God does which makes man alive in his inner spirit.

And how is that effected? The Bible says it is by receiving Jesus (John 1:12). But how does one receive Him? The Bible says it is by believing on His name (John 1:12). The sinner is born again and becomes a saint by trusting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

The Bible states the truth very plainly: “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*” (I John 5:1). The First Epistle of John was written “*unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that you have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*”(I John 5:13).

You are born again (born from above, born of God) when you trust God. Your trust is based on what you learn of God in the Bible. Therefore, you are “*born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*” (I Peter 1:23).

Received immediately

Eternal life is received immediately when one is born again by faith in Jesus Christ. God does not promise to give us eternal life after we have died. He does not promise to give us eternal life when we stand before Him in judgment in eternity. Eternal life is the present possession of the person who trusts Jesus.

Notice the present tense of the verbs in the words of Jesus recorded in John 3:14-16, “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Again, Jesus said, “*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*” (John 3:36).

The Apostle John joined his testimony with that of our Lord and wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*” (I John 3:2).

What a testimony of grace! I am glad it is so. Salvation does not come to us bit by bit or piece by piece. When the sinner turns from his sin in repentance and commits himself to God in faith, an eternal transaction takes place in his spirit. He is created anew in Christ Jesus. As the

Bible says, *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (II Corinthians 5:17). Praise the Lord!

The Bible teaches that there are three parts to each person. Each one is a spirit, a soul, and a body. The body is the world-conscious part of man. The soul is the self-conscious part of man. The spirit is the God-conscious part of man. The person who is not saved by faith in Jesus Christ is said to be “dead” to God. That means his spirit is empty. He is separated from God. There is no life of God in him.

What happens when a person is saved? The Spirit of God moves into the spirit of man and takes up permanent residence there. The life of God begins to be lived in that person’s body. He is *“born again”* to a new spiritual life, which he has not known before. He is *“a new creature”* in Christ Jesus. He can say, *“Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20). That is what it means to be born again.

Received by grace

The new life in Christ does not come on the basis of human merit. It is not received because a person does good works. It comes solely on the basis of God’s free grace. Eternal life is a gift of God (Romans 6:23). The Christian no longer lives his own human life only; he now lives the life of God in his physical body. That is why he is a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17). Only the Christian has the life of God being lived in him, because only the Christian trusts Jesus Christ personally as Lord and Savior.

Have you been *“born again”*? Jesus said that unless you were born again, you could not see or enter into God’s kingdom (John 3:3, 5). To good people and to bad people His message is the same; *“You must be born again.”*

I invite you in Jesus’ name to come to Him now and receive the new and eternal life which He gives. He invites you by this message and waits for your response. Confess your sins to Him. Ask for His mercy and forgiveness. Trust Him to forgive you, just because He said He would. And thank Him for doing it. That is how you can be saved. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13).

FREE FROM CONDEMNATION

Personal faith in Jesus Christ sets you free from the condemnation of sin. That is wonderful, isn’t it? Personal faith in Jesus Christ sets you free from the condemnation of sin. Hallelujah! He who is born again, born of God, is no longer the servant of sin. He no longer is bound to sin’s desires to satisfy its lusts. The Bible counsels the Christian, *“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... For sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law, but under grace”* (Romans 6:11,14). Again the Bible says, *“Being made free from sin...ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* (Romans 6:22).

Sin is the cause of all our problems. If we could be free from sin, we would be accepted in peace before God . But the only way to-be free from sin is to become a new creation through faith in Jesus Christ. When any sinner, even the worst of sinners, trusts Jesus Christ as personal Savior, he is delivered from sin.

No condemnation now

There is no condemnation of the believer at the present. Romans 8:1 reads, *“There is therefore*

now no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. “The statement is made as a shout of victory, “No condemnation to them in Christ Jesus!” But the adverb “now” adds a further dimension to the joy of that announcement.

To say there is “*NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*” means the sin problem is already solved for the person who trusts Jesus. The sin problem is already solved. The guilt is already removed. The penalty is already met. So completely has God dealt with sin that there is “*NOW no condemnation.*”

Do you catch the thrust of it? God has already settled the issue of your sin if you are trusting Jesus. All condemnation has already been taken away. You are already set free from any danger which judgment might hold for you. Sin is forgiven, and you are declared “not guilty” by the

Judge of the universe, the eternal God.

You who are trusting Jesus can rest securely. Even if you die today, you have nothing to fear. “*There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1). You are free from danger! Someone might wonder, “I know I am free from condemnation right now, but what if I should sin? Might I be condemned because of sin sometime in the future?” The Bible answers:

No condemnation ever

There will be no condemnation to the Christian in the future Jesus Himself said, “*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*” (John 5:24). Let us examine that statement.

(1) One must hear the gospel before he can be saved: “He that heareth my word.” (2) One must respond to the truth of the Gospel with personal faith in God: “and believeth on him that send me.” (3) One who hears the Gospel and trusts God to forgive on the basis of what Jesus did in His death and resurrection is saved: “hath everlasting life.” (4) The one who is saved has no fear of future judgment because he “shall not come into condemnation.” (5) All judgment of condemnation is passed for the Christian, and he has already “*passed from death unto life.*”

I point once more to the words of Jesus. The believer SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION that is as positively as He could say it. That is as emphatically as it can be stated in the English language. If you are trusting Jesus, there will never come an occasion, in time or in eternity, when you will stand condemned before God. Jesus Himself has given His word on it. Praise the Lord!

Does that give you assurance and peace? It does if you believe the Bible! God said it. He recorded it in His inspired Word. That settles the issue. Rest in it. Refuse to be filled with fretting any longer. God has undertaken for you. He has promised, and He will perform. “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. . . whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” (1John 5:1,4,5).

Kept by the power of God

There will be no condemnation to the Christian in the present or the future because he is kept by the power of God and protected from condemnation. First Peter 1:5 says Christians “*are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” Notice that we are “*kept by the power of God.*” “What a wonderful promise.

That verb “kept” is used in secular language to refer to a soldier standing on guard duty. He challenges those who pass by. The one who is authorized is permitted to enter; all others are turned away. Just so, the power of God stands guard duty before the Christian. The power which is authorized may enter to deal with the Christian. All others are turned away.

What power is it that guards the Christian? It is “*the power of God.*” His is a power “*that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” and it is a power that is working in us now (Ephesians 3:20). There is no power equal to that of God. All other powers combined do not equal His power. The person who is kept by the power of God is safe from all forces which would do him harm.

Can you say with the Apostle Paul, “*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*” (II Timothy 1:12)? I hope you can say that with assurance, for therein is your peace and hope for the future.

If you trust in your own ability, you will never have assurance. How can you ever know that you tried hard enough, were good enough, repented enough, or trusted enough? There is no way to know. But if you recognize your hope is in Jesus Christ and what He has done for you, you can have a blessed assurance. Jesus said, “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one*” (John 10:27-30). Did you get the picture? Jesus holds you in His hand, and the Father holds you in His hand. Jesus said there is no power in existence which is able to remove from His hand or the Father’s hand. You are secure!

Does that seem too good to be true? It is true I do not argue with the promises of God. That will only bring distress to your spirit. Accept as eternal truth what the Bible says on the subject. Believe it. Stake your soul’s eternal destiny on the truth of it. And you can live in peace.

Jesus prayed to the Father, “*Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:11, 15, 17). And God the Father answers Jesus prayer as He keeps you safe in grace.

GOD’S SPIRIT WITHIN

There is a promise in Holy Scripture which sounds almost too good to be true. It is expressed in the Second Epistle of Peter, chapter 1, verse 4, in these words: “*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” Notice the statement that we are “*partakers of the divine nature.*” That is almost unbelievable. Indeed, we might not believe.

What does it mean to be “*partakers of the divine nature*”? It means we receive the nature of God! How do we receive the nature of God? We receive God’s nature when we are born of God.

You received a human nature when you were born physically to human parents. You receive a divine nature when you are born spiritually by God.

To be a Christian is to be a “born one,” born of God (John 1:11-13). You cannot be a Christian without being born again, born of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-5). When you are born of

God, you receive the nature of God.

The Christian looks up to God and calls Him “Father.” Jesus taught us to pray, “*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name*” (Matthew 6:9). He assured us, “*The Father himself loveth you*” (John 16:27). The Bible further speaks of God’s attitude toward us in Jesus Christ, quoting His words, “*I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*” (II Corinthians 6:17, 18). The Christian looks up to God and recognizes Him as Heavenly Father; then God looks upon the Christian and recognizes him as a born child of the Father.

What is the divine nature, which the Christian receives when he trusts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? The nature of God is the Holy Spirit of God who comes to indwell those who trust Jesus.

Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

The Christian has the nature of God within because he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Jesus made that very plain in His conversation with a poor fallen woman at a village well in Samaria. He had asked her for a drink of the water she was drawing from the well and entered into conversation with her. He told her, “*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*” The woman wisely replied, “*Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not*” (John 4:13-15).

On another occasion, Jesus was attending a religious festival in Jerusalem. In the rituals of the ceremonies, there was a point at which the priests poured out water before God as a sign of humility, inability, and repentance from sin. When that ceremony was performed, “*Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*” (John 7:37, 38).

What did Jesus mean? He said there would be a well of water within each of us who trust Him. That well of water would bubble forth and overflow so that rivers of water would stream forth from us. What does He mean? The Bible shows that Jesus is using the idea of water, a well of water, and a river of water, to illustrate a spiritual truth. “*This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive*” (John 7:39). Put the name of the Holy Spirit in the place of “*water*” in Jesus’ statements, and you have the true meaning.

Jesus said those who trust Him would have the Holy Spirit living within each of them (in their human spirit). He would be energetic and give forth life like an artesian well bubbles forth its water. From each Christian the influence of God’s Holy Spirit would go forth day by day and bless people around him.

That is the “divine nature” which God said He would give those who trust Jesus. The nature of God is the Spirit of God. At conversion, the Spirit of God moves into the spirit of man and takes up permanent residence there. The believer is filled with God Himself, the nature of God, in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. In truth, we are “*partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*” (II Peter 1:4).

Sealed unto eternity

The nature of God within the Christian “seals” him unto eternity. The Bible informs us that “*after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:13, 14). Again it counsels to “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye

are sealed unto the day of redemption”(Ephesians 4:30). Again the Bible reads, “*Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*” (II Corinthians 1:21,22). Notice the repeated reference to the Christian’s being “sealed” by the Holy Spirit of God.

The word “seal” means “mark” or “brand.” It is a sign by which a person or thing is identified. In the great cattle ranches of my country, the owners will burn a particular mark into the skin of each animal to identify that cow as belonging to that particular rancher. Each ranch has its own special brand. That is the “seal” or mark of that owner.

The Holy Spirit is the “seal” by which God identifies those who belong to Him in Jesus Christ. The person who has the Spirit of God living in his human spirit belongs to God. The person who does not have the Spirit of God living in his human spirit is not a child of God. The Bible says, “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*” (Romans 8:9).

That is a basis of our assurance of security in Christ. God looks upon us and sees His own Holy Spirit living within us. That marks us as His own. “*And a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*” (Malachi 3:16, 17).

God will never condemn His own nature. His nature is within us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. That makes us secure. The Holy Spirit is “*the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:14). That word “earnest” means “guarantee.” The fact that the Spirit of God dwells in you is your guarantee of eternal salvation. Hear this word: “*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself*” (II Timothy 2:13).

God will not reject His own divine nature. We receive the divine nature at conversion. Therefore, God will not reject us as His own dear children. Believe it and rejoice in it. “*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*” (Romans 8:15, 16). You have received the divine nature by faith in Jesus Christ.

IN GOD’S HANDS

One basis of the Christian’s assurance of his security in Christ is that he is in the hands of God. One of the great Christian hymns reads in part, “What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms. What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus; leaning on the everlasting arms.” The hymn is based on a statement of Holy Scripture recorded in Deuteronomy 33:27, “*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee.*” What a basis of assurance of our safety from all spiritual dangers in Him.

Jesus took up that theme of the believer’s security in Christ and stated it this way: “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one*” (John 10:27-30). Think about that promise and rejoice!

Let us list the basis of assurance given in John 10:27-30. (1) Each believer is a “sheep” in God’s flock and under the care of the Good Shepherd. (2) The Shepherd knows each one

personally. (3) He gives eternal life to each one. (4) Those to whom He gives eternal life shall never perish. (5) Each one is in the Shepherd's own hand. (6) No power is able to pluck one out of His hand. (7) Each one is in the hand of God the Father. (8) No power is able to pluck one out of the Father's hand. (9) The Father is greater than any other person or power, even greater than all other persons or powers. (10) Jesus the Son and God the Father are one in essence, purpose, power, and work. There is absolute security and blessed assurance to each one who trusts Jesus as Lord and Savior.

When beset with physical suffering

Physical opposition or sufferings cannot remove God's people from His protection. Romans 8:35-37 reads, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."*

Look at that list of evils again. Those are oppositions which arise from the bad circumstances in which one might live. Those are evils which men might bring on us or that the devil brings against us through the agency of bad people. It is a fearful list.

"Tribulation" means all kinds of suffering which comes from the outside. It might be beatings, imprisonment, mocking, or opposition of evil men. "Distress" is that suffering which is born in the human spirit. It might be fear, anxiety, the sorrow of being rejected, the grief of being purposefully misinterpreted and ridiculed. "Persecution" means to be put under pressure. It refers to oppression. "Famine" is starvation. "Nakedness" refers to such dire lack that one does not have sufficient clothing to cover and protect the body. "Peril" refers to dangers or jeopardy of any sort. "Sword" means death itself.

God does not say the Christian shall face all those evils. The Bible rather lists the worse things which would come upon a person from a wicked world. Suppose all these should happen, suppose that bad goes to worse. Would this separate us from the love of God which He has shown to us in Christ Jesus our Lord?

Absolutely not! The Apostle Paul writes with great assurance, *"In all these things we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through him that loved us."* We do not just conquer. We are super conquerors! If we spoke in terms of money, we might say a man is a millionaire. Paul would say here that we are multi-millionaires. We conquer and more than conquer. We gain victory over the enemy and go beyond to totally vanquish and defeat him. The devil gains no sort of victory. He is driven from the field of battle in humiliation and defeat. Praise God, *"In all these things we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through him that loved us."*

Do you ask, "How can that be possible?" The Bible answers, *"The battle is not yours, but God's... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you... for the Lord will be with you"* (II Chronicles 20:1-29).

The Apostle Paul understood that truth and wrote, *"Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (I Corinthians 15:57).

Do you understand and rejoice in that truth, also? The victory is not dependent upon our personal abilities to stand against the Devil. The victory is of God.

When opposed by spiritual forces

"But," someone may object, "what about the danger which comes from malignant spiritual forces which are the enemies of the child of God?" The answer is given in these words of

scripture: *“I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38, 39).

That list takes in all changes in condition: *“life and death.”* It considers all orders of beings: *“angels, principalities, powers.”* It reviews all scope of space: *“height, depth.”* It thinks upon all types of beings: *“any other creature,”* which means anything in creation, including the devil himself. Not one or a combination of them all can *“separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

God said that the wicked one (who is called Satan and the devil) cannot touch the child of God. Consider I John 5:18, which reads, *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”* Did you catch that statement? *“The wicked one does not touch one who is born of God.”* We know God, and we are in Jesus Christ beyond the reach of the devil. *“This is the true God, and eternal life”* (I John 5:20).

The Christian is not overcome by the evil world system. He overcomes the world in Jesus. Listen to these words recorded in the First Epistle of John, 5:1, 4, 5, *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. .whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

God has a great deal invested in His children. Jesus has died for us. The Holy Spirit has convicted us of sin and called us to God in repentance and faith. God has justified us. He has given us eternal life. He has placed His Spirit in us to mark and preserve us as His own. He continues to minister in us to make us more and more like Jesus. He has reserved a place in heaven for us. He considers us His treasure in Jesus Christ. He has promised us, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5). That is what God does for you when you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

SIN NOT IMPUTED

God uses many illustrations to help us understand spiritual things and to explain what He has provided for us in Jesus Christ the Savior. He goes into the accountant’s office of the business world to pick up one illustration. He pictures a great ledger sheet with your name at the top. There is a debit column and a credit column on that sheet. In one column He writes all the sins for which He holds you responsible. In the other column He writes all the reasons for which those sins should be forgiven. The great problem is that all the writing is on the side of debt, obligation, and accountability and nothing is written on the side of credit for payment. The word commonly used in the King James Version of the Bible to describe God’s bookkeeping work is the term *“impute.”* You find it used in many instances in the Christian scriptures.

Psalms 32 is a typical passage, *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the daylong. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou for-gayest the iniquity of my sin”* (Psalm 32:1-5).

It is possible that God’s method of bookkeeping is reversed for some people. There are some,

who are called “*blessed*” in the text, “*unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*. “That means there are some people whose debt of sin has been paid, and God no longer has a writing against, them that holds them liable for payment and in danger of judgment for lack of payment. That is a most blessed condition. It is possible for you and me and every person to have that kind of relationship with God. Blessed is the person against whose account God does not write the guilt and responsibility for sin.

How could such a thing be possible? To answer the question we must turn to the New Testament scriptures. Two things must happen for God to be just in not holding a person’s sin against him any longer. (1) The debt for all past sins must be paid and (2) provision must be made for any sins committed after that first satisfaction of the debt. That is just what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

The Bible reports that there are three great acts of imputation which God has performed toward men. (1) The sin of Adam, the first human, was imputed and passed on to all his descendants. (2) The sin of the whole human race was imputed to Jesus who bore it in His own body when He went to the cross and died for sinners. (3) The righteousness of Jesus Christ the very righteousness of God Himself is imputed to each one who trusts Jesus as personal Lord and Savior.

The example of Abraham

The fourth chapter of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans is an extended discussion of God’s act in imputing righteousness to us and no longer imputing sin. It looks to the experience of Abraham (recorded in Genesis 15). It reads, in part, “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Romans 4:3). That means God accepted Abraham’s faith and called Abraham a righteous man because of his trust in God.

There was no merit in Abraham which made him deserve to be made righteous before God. He had not even been circumcised at that time. God declared Abraham to be justified on the basis of his faith alone in order that we might have an example of how a person is made righteous through faith. That will encourage us to trust God for the removal of sin and the provision of righteousness.

Romans 4:22-25 reads, “*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it (that is, righteousness) 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, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*”

God made a promise to Abraham that the patriarch would have a multitude of people descend from him by physical birth. The promise was made when Abraham was an old man and his wife Sarah was an old woman. They had lived together in marriage for many years, and no child had been born. They had passed the age of child bearing. Yet, God said they would have a son from whom a multitude of descendants would come. Abraham believed God. He saw no proof of it. All evidence indicated God would not or could not perform what He promised. But God promised and Abraham believed God. God saw his faith and wrote to his account that he was righteous.

The experience of believers

What He did for Abraham is what God does for you and me today. He has promised forgiveness of our sins on the basis of what Jesus did in His death and resurrection almost 2,000 years ago. We do not understand how it can be. We do not know how His death before we were born

could atone for sins we had not committed at that time. But God says it is so. We believe it just because God said it. We trust God. Just as God accepted Abraham's faith and counted it to him for righteousness, God accepts our faith and declares us righteous.

A transaction takes place in heaven. On that great ledger sheet with my name at the top all the listed sins are blotted out so they can no longer be read. On that sheet there is written the righteousness of God instead of the sins of man. When God looks at that sheet, there is no list of sins there. There is only the credit for the righteousness of God which is given me in Jesus Christ.

That is what it means to receive forgiveness and salvation in Jesus. That is what God does for you when you trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. Your sins are forgiven, taken away, covered by the blood, cast into the sea, put behind God's back, and forgotten forever. God has promised it. You can trust Him to do as He says. Forgiveness of sins means the guilt of forgiven sin will never face you again.

"But what about sins I commit after I receive God's forgiveness?" The answer of God is "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John 1:7). That means the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing the believer in Jesus from sin day by day.

That is the basis of our hope of security in Christ. Forgiveness does not mean God takes care of past sins only. He makes provision for future sins as well. "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (I John 1:9).

God leaves nothing undone which might threaten our security in Jesus Christ. He saves for eternity. He has committed Himself to keep us eternally. He places His own Holy Spirit within to live in us. He holds us in His hand to protect us. He no longer writes our sins against us as a possible condemnation to hell. We are safe in Jesus. Praise the Lord!