

What Assured Hope Can We Have Beyond The Grave?

Part 2

Throughout The Christian Bible we see emphasised that the final outcome of our sin is eternal death.

Ezekiel 18:4 *“The soul who sins is the one who will die.”*

James 1:15 *“..... sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*

That was the bad news.

This time we will see the good news of what God has done for us already.

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

When Jesus became identified with our sin, it was inevitable that He should also experience death which is the outcome of sin.

Hebrews 2:9 *“But we see **Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels, [human so He could die] now crowned with glory and honour [after His resurrection] because He suffered death, so that by the Grace of God **He might taste death for everyone.**”*

Jesus bore the sin of all humanity, and so died the death due to all humanity.

Now all who in faith accept His substitutionary sacrifice are offered the gift of eternal life by the indwelling of Holy Spirit in us.

Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, **but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”*

John 11:25-26 Jesus said *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies [a physical death, or a symbolic death in baptism] and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die [eternally]. Do you believe this?”*

Christ made this statement to Martha just before He illustrated His power over death by restoring life to her brother, Lazarus.

Note: “Lives” as well as “believes”, on acceptance of Christ’s Death in our stead, **we then have to begin living a new life.**

Romans 6:1-3 *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! **We died to sin** [by accepting the sacrifice of Christ]. *How can we live in it [sin] any longer or don’t you know that **all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?**”**

Baptism shows outwardly that we identify with Christ’s death in our stead and is commanded by scripture.

Acts 2:38-39 *“Repent and be baptised, every one of you. In the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and*

your children, and for all who are far off [in time or distance] for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

The final command given by Jesus to those who were to continue the work He started is recorded in:-

Matthew 28:18-20 *“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples [students] of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’”*

Romans 6:4-6 *“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the Glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection; for we know that our **old self was crucified with Him** so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”*

The word translated “sin” in this passage of scripture means “failing to hit the mark”.

This may be by doing something wrong and hurtful or failing to do something good when the opportunity is made available to us. There will be times when we do fail in this way but as long as we are not slavishly failing all the time the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf will cover these mishaps.

Romans 6:7-10 *“Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin [the penalty of sin – death – is the ultimate power the law has over us, once we die the law cannot reach us]. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to [do away with] sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.”*

Once we accept the death of Jesus the Christ in our stead we will not die eternally.

But continuing to follow the example of Christ we must now, in response to what Christ has done for us, live our lives in serving God, *“lives to God”*.

Romans 6:11-13 *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ. Therefore [as a result of what God has done for us] do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.”*

“Parts of your body” – every part of our body, our mind, skills, eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc., etc., not just part of the time but as a bond slave all of the time.

Romans 6:13 *“But offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.”*

Romans 6:16-18 *“Don’t you know that when you offer yourself to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience [to God], which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you whole-heartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted [God’s revealed Word, The Christian Bible]. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”*

The way we resist **sinning**, missing the mark, that is **missing the purpose for God giving us life**; is to totally offer all of our life to serving the Creator God who gave us physical life and can give us, as a gift, eternal life.

Job 14:14-17 *“If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal [by a resurrection to a new being] to come. You will call [most likely from physical death in our grave] and I will answer you [new life implied by our being able to converse again after the silence of death in the grave]. You will long for the creature your hands have made.”*

Job knew the Power of God had to resurrect him after death.

He also knew that God as a Master Potter desires the work of his hands.

While in our present physical state God desires to mould us into a loving, caring, faithful person like Himself.

Isaiah 64:8 *“Yet, O Lord, you are our Father [the one who gives us life]. We are the clay, you are the potter, we are the work of your hands.”*

Matthew 25:31-34 *“When the Son of Man [another title given to Jesus portraying one of His offices] comes in all His Glory, and the angels with Him, [referring to Jesus the Christ’s Second Coming, this time in power to rule not die for our sins], He will sit on His Throne in Heavenly Glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Then the King [Jesus on His Throne] will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world’.”*

This scripture is looking forward in time to the Second Coming of Jesus the Christ and the giving of rewards to those who are using this life of trials and pains to prepare for a far more glorious life after the death of this mortal body.

Matthew 25:35-36 *“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”*

These verses show **our part** in the moulding that God the Master Potter is doing, our showing an outward, loving concern for the welfare of others.

Revelation 21:1-7 *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His People, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.’”*

A wonderful picture of a future that God has for us, when all who mourn today will be re-united with their loved ones.

Take comfort from these words of truth, directly taken from *The Word of God, which cannot fail*.

There is assured hope beyond the grave for all who are willing to believe God and surrender their lives to Him to mould day by day into the types of people we, as well as God, would like to share eternity with.

The other alternative is then shown us in the verse that follows the description of the “wonderful world tomorrow” we have just read.

Revelation 21:8 *“But to the cowardly, the unbeliever, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

To help you believe God, know His Will for you, and surrender to Him in preparation to inherit this wonderful world tomorrow, there are other people in your area who are on this journey.

They are called Christians.

I encourage you to contact a Christian church near to you that uses God's Word, the Christian Bible, as the "*yard stick*" as to judge how we should conduct our lives.

I can assure you that you will never regret such a decision.