

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

FORGIVENESS

By Jeff Sweeten

Very few would be so bold as to claim that one can be saved and go to Heaven while still guilty of sins. Somewhere in life, one must be forgiven of sins. After all, isn't that why Jesus came: to take away our sins (1 John 3:5)? So, one of the thorny questions that divides religious people into their separate camps is the answer to the question: "When is one's sins forgiven?" This is what some might call a "hot-button issue." So, let's push that button.

According to Romans 6:17-18, Paul taught that there is an identifiable point at which one can scripturally say, "I'm freed from sin"; and he was very thankful for the sin-free state in which he found the Roman Christians. He said:

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." Romans 16:17-18

So, it was these Roman Christians' past condition (that state of being yet in their sins) from which they had been delivered by obeying from the heart "that form of doctrine" (evidently, faith alone was not enough; one also had to obey, cf. Hebrews 5:9). What "form" was Paul talking about? Clearly, he was referencing a form of doctrine which he had previously discussed in Romans 6:3-4, wherein one is buried in baptism and rises up to walk in newness of life. So, it was that form of doctrine (a form of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection) that, when obeyed from the heart, changed their state from being in sin to being made free from sin.

What an amazing coincidence! That is exactly what Peter preached at Pentecost. His audience went into panic mode when they realized that they had just crucified God's Son and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter promptly told them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). That is exactly what Ananias told Saul to do after his vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus; "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16).

Like the push of a button, forgiveness is readily and easily available in the watery grave of baptism.

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130