

Sermon #1593^[1]

Sermons

Miscellaneous

Title: **“HE HATH MADE HIM SIN”**

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Subject: *Christ’s Being Made Sin*

Introduction:

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

There is nothing in all the world so tormenting as guilt. I do not doubt that the very fires of hell that cannot be quenched are relentlessly fueled by an indescribable sense of guilt tormenting the soul. The worm that never dies in the pit of the damned, that undying worm that forever gnaws upon the fully awakened consciences of the damned is guilt.

But even in this world, there is nothing more tormenting to a man than a sense of guilt. I am not talking about mere sense of guilt with regard to men, but a consciousness of guilt before the infinite, holy, eternal God! Some of you are struggling with such guilt. Your screaming conscience torments you day and night. You have tried to silence it with prayers, Bible reading, moral reformation, and religious duty. But when you toss upon your bed in the lonely watches of the night, alone before God, you find that your bed is too short and your covering too narrow, and you cannot rest. Your refuge of lies is swept away in a moment before the bar of God’s holiness, justice and truth. In your very soul, you cry and weep, tremble and quake, with an overwhelming sense of guilt and the fear of eternal damnation. You cannot rest. You have found, and find day after day, that there is *“no rest for the wicked.”*

^[1] Date: Monday Evening — October 18, 2004
 Sequoyah Baptist Church — Cherokee, NC
 Danville — Sunday Morning — October 24, 2004

Tape # Y-47a

Some of you who are my brothers and sisters in Christ, true believers, some of you who are born of God, yet struggle with a horrible sense of guilt. You know that Christ paid your sin debt; but you still carry the weight of guilt. Oh, what an unbearable weight it is! You know that the Lord Jesus has redeemed you from the curse of the law; but you still carry the weight of the condemned in your soul. You know that Christ is the Lord your Righteousness, that you are made the righteousness of God in him; but your soul is still filled with guilt. Why? Because you are keenly aware of your own, inward lusts and sin. You still bear your own iniquities in your soul.

There is nothing that makes the life of a poor, tender soul so painfully bitter as this oppressive, unbearable load of sin and guilt. Satan knows that there is no yoke so oppressive, no bondage so cruel to your soul as this. Therefore, he constantly accuses you, and your flesh says, “Amen,” to his accusations.

A MESSAGE FROM GOD

I have a message from God for your soul. It is specifically to you who carry the weight of sin and guilt in your souls that I speak. If God the Holy Spirit will give you ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to believe what he declares to us in our text, you will find the message of this text worth more than a mountain of gold to your soul. I call your attention to one statement found in 2 Corinthians 5:21. The declaration of God the Holy Spirit to which I direct your attention is so simple and clear that it is stated in five, short, one syllable words. Yet, in these five words God the Holy Spirit teaches us the most important, most profound, most mysterious, and most soul-cheering thing in all the universe. Read them with me. — ***“He hath made him sin.”***

That’s my message. — *“He hath made him sin.”* No, I did not read the txt wrong. I read it right. The words *“to be,”* you will notice, are in italics. That means they were inserted by our translators to make the text

read more smoothly, though there are no words corresponding to them in the text. — “*He hath made him sin.*”

CONTEXT

In this passage, Paul is calling us to faith in Christ. He urges us to be reconciled to God upon the basis of reconciliation already made at the cross, promising righteousness, the very righteousness of God, to all who trust Christ. This message, he urges us to believe, and to believe now. His message is both urgent and authoritative, for it comes to us from one who speaks as the very ambassador of God. Indeed, it is God himself speaking to us by him (2 Cor. 5:17-6:2).

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

But the entire message of this passage, indeed, the entire message of the Bible is built and hangs upon this one profoundly glorious fact. — “*He hath made him sin.*”

- We cannot be made new creatures in Christ until “*He hath made him sin.*”
- God cannot reconcile us to himself until “*He hath made him sin.*”
- We cannot be reconciled to God until “*He hath made him sin.*”
- We cannot be made the righteousness of God in Christ until “*He hath made him sin.*”
- We cannot receive grace until “*He hath made him sin.*”

(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

What a profound truth, what stupendous grace, what wondrous mystery these words contain I cannot tell you. “He,” God the Father, “hath,” in holy justice and infinite mercy, “made,” to become, created, “Him,” the Lord Jesus Christ, his infinite, well-beloved, only begotten, immaculate Son, “sin,” an awful mass of iniquity, “for us,” helpless, condemned, sinful rebels! From the depths of my inmost soul, I pray that the Lord will enable me, at least once, before I die, to preach the message of this text as it ought to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. I will not strive to be eloquent or impressive. I want to simply explain to you, to the best of my ability, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the words of our text — “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

This is the greatest transaction that ever took place upon the earth, the most marvelous sight that men ever saw, and the most stupendous wonder that heaven ever executed. Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Jesus Christ, the spotless Son of God, was made sin!

If ever we find rest, peace, and joy in our souls, if ever a sinner is made to be of good cheer, having the blessed knowledge of the forgiveness of sin, it must be fetched from that which is declared in our text. — “*He hath made him sin for us.*” No sinner will ever find real rest for his soul,

a bed that he can stretch himself upon and a cover broad enough to wrap himself in, but this. — “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

NOT STATED

I. *First*, let me show you **what the text does not say.**

A. It is not stated, as it is most commonly suggested, that God the Father made his Son “**a sin-offering.**”

The Scriptures do declare, “*thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.*” Our all-glorious Christ is our sin-offering. We have no offering for sin but him. But that is not what this text says. Here the Holy Spirit declares, “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

B. The Apostle does here tell us that Christ was made “**a sacrifice for sin.**”

He is that. We rejoice to declare that when our blessed Savior died as our Substitute, he himself “*one sacrifice for sins*” and “*sat down on the right hand of God.*” Because of his one sacrifice “*there remaineth therefore no more sacrifice for sin!*” But here the Spirit of God tells us, “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

C. Again, the Holy Spirit does not tell us here that Christ was “**reckoned to be sin**” by his Father.

That is the way we would read the text, if we followed the implications of our translators in adding those words “*to be.*” Yes, he was reckoned to be sin and punished as such for us. But here we read, “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

D. In the same line of thought, it must be pointed out that our Lord Jesus is not here said to have **sin imputed to him.**

Sin was indeed, imputed to our Substitute, it was laid to his charge, but that is because “*He hath made him sin for us.*” But as far as the words of Holy Scripture are concerned, it is nowhere stated in the Book of God that sin was imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a single passage in the Bible that speaks of our sins being imputed to our Savior.

In Romans 4 the word “imputation” or its equivalent (accounting or reckoning) is used seven times. It is mentioned again in chapter 5 (v. 13). But in those places God the Holy Spirit speaks of sin not being imputed to us and of righteousness being imputed to us. Yes, our sins were imputed to Christ when he was made sin for us, and because “*He hath made him sin for us.*” But the Word of God never uses the word impute, or any word like it, to speak of sin being imputed to Christ.

MADE SIN

II. Now, let me show you what our text does reveal. — “***He hath made him sin.***”

John Gill said, “He was made sin itself...The sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him...He sustained their persons and bore their sins. And having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin.”

I am fully aware that natural reason opposes it. And many have endeavored to make the Word of God say something else. We are told that Christ had sin imputed to him, that he bore the guilt of sin, that he was charged with the debt of our sins, that he became accountable for our sins, that he bore all the effects of our sins, and that he was treated as if he were sin. But this plain, straightforward, blessed statement of Holy Scripture is almost universally denied by men. — “*He hath made him sin.*” But there it stands. — “*He hath made him sin.*” How can this be? What can it mean?

In human law and reason, among men, I fully acknowledge that guilt cannot be transferred, but only its effects. Among the sons of men, a third person may cancel my debts but not my crimes. But I am not talking to you about things men can, or may do. I am talking to you about what our God has done. And in this great affair of salvation our great God stands infinitely alone. In this, his most glorious work, there is such a display of justice, mercy, wisdom and power, as never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Consequently, it can have no parallel in the actions of mortals. — “*Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me*” (Isaiah 45:21).

(Micah 7:18) “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth (BEARETH) iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*”

Were our sins transferred to Christ and made to be his, or was our Savior only treated as if that were the case? **What do the Scriptures say?** I am not even slightly concerned about what men say concerning this matter. I only want to know this. — What does God say in his Word? This is what God says. — “*He hath made him sin.*”

In this statement, “*He hath made him sin,*” the word “*made*” is very significant. It is not a legal term, but a word that carries the idea of “create.” It means, “by one act gather together and cause to be.” Paul is telling us that God the Father, by one great, mysterious act, gathered together all the sins of all his elect throughout all the ages of time, and caused his darling Son to be sin for us.

(Isaiah 53:6) “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*”

(Isaiah 53:12) “Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

(1 Peter 2:24) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

The Word of God plainly teaches that Christ our blessed Surety was made sin for us, that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that the Lord God laid upon him our iniquities, that “*He hath made him sin.*”

MOSAIC TYPES

A. This transfer of sin from the sinner to the sinner’s Surety was clearly set forth in the typical sacrifices of the Mosaic law.

It was typified and prefigured by the sinner laying his hands on the head of the animal he brought to be sacrificed in his stead before God. You will recall that when Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated as priests unto God, they were commanded to “*put their hands on the head of the bullock,*” which represented typically the transfer of their sins to the bullock which was then counted worthy of death. Because the bullock bearing their sins was counted worthy of death, the Lord commanded, “*And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*” (Ex. 29:10-11).

Perhaps the clearest, most well-known picture of the transfer of our sins to the Lord Jesus Christ and of him putting away our sin by bearing them and bearing them away in his own body on the tree is the scapegoat presented before the Lord on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:20-22).

(Leviticus 16:20-22) “And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy *place*, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: (21) And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: (22) And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

Now, notice what the Lord sets before us in this picture.

- Here is the transfer of sin from the people to the goat — from us to Christ.
- Here is the transfer of the sins of a particular people, of their sins and only their sins — the sins of the children of Israel.
- Here is the transfer of all the sins of the children of Israel.
- Here we see the sins transferred from the people to the goat taken away.

(Psalms 103:12) “As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

(Hebrews 1:3) “Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

(Hebrews 9:26-28) “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

(1 John 3:5) “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

THE SIN-OFFERING

While we are here in Leviticus, look at Leviticus 4:21. Let me show you something about Israel’s sin-offering.

(Leviticus 4:21) “And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it *is* a sin offering for the congregation.”

The word translated “*sin-offering*” would really be better translated “sin.” It literally means, “habitual sinfulness, or offender.” This very same word is translated “sin” in Hosea 4:8, where God indicts the priests of the people for eating the sin-offering, “*the sin,*” of his people, while they set their hearts on their iniquity.

(Hosea 4:8) “They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.”

God’s word to Moses in Leviticus 4:21 is really this — “*And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is **THE SIN OF THE CONGREGATION.***”

TRESPASS OFFERING

Look at Leviticus 5 (vv. 6-7 and 18).

(Leviticus 5:6-7) “And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin. (7) And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed,

two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.”

(Leviticus 5:18) “And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist *it* not, and it shall be forgiven him.”

The word translated “*trespass offering*” means guilt. And again, the word translated “*sin-offering*” means “habitual sinfulness, or offender.” **John Calvin** accurately states...

“The victims and expiations offered for sins were called (Æasham — *aw-shawm*) a word which properly signifies sin itself. By this appellation, the Spirit intended to suggest, that they were vicarious sacrifices to receive and sustain the curse due to sin. But that which was figuratively represented in the Mosaic sacrifices, is actually exhibited in Christ, the archetype of the figures. Wherefore, in order to effect a complete expiation, he gave his soul, that is, an *atonement sacrifice for sin*, as the prophet says; so that our guilt, and consequent punishment, being as it were, transferred to him, must cease to be imputed to us.” (Institutes, Book 2, chap. 16.)

ISAIAH 53

B. The Prophet Isaiah clearly declares that the Lord Jesus Christ, our all-glorious Substitute and Savior was made to bear our sins, not just the consequences of them, but our sins themselves, when he was made an offering for sin.

Isaiah 53 clearly and distinctly tells us that he not only bore our sorrows and griefs, the consequences of our sins, but our sins themselves. In this portion of Holy Scripture, our Savior is set before us as one “*despised*

and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He was such, not on his own account, but because he is our blessed Substitute. Our transgressions wounded him. Our iniquities bruised him. Yes, by all means, we read, — “*Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.*” But he carried more than our griefs and sorrows. He was made sin for us.

(Isaiah 53:6) “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and **the LORD hath laid on him** the iniquity of us all.”

(Isaiah 53:8-12) “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: **for the transgression of my people was he stricken.** (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) **Yet** it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, (**Isaiah uses the very same word we saw in Leviticus 5.** — **Æasham - aw-shawm** — **“guiltiness” and “sin.”**) he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: **by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.** (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare (**received, accepted, took, and carried**) the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

In these solemn transactions, our Lord Jesus stood as the great Surety of many. As debts are transferred from the original debtor to the surety, so our sins were transferred from us to our great Surety, our sinless, spotless, holy, harmless, undefiled Redeemer, and were made to be his. He bore them and he bore them (received, accepted, took, and carried them) freely, willingly as our beloved Surety. And as the surety must

pay the debt which by transfer becomes his own, so Christ was stricken for wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and endured all the wrath of God to the full satisfaction of justice to make peace for us!

THE PSALMS

C. Christ's being made sin and the transfer of our sins from us to Christ is clearly revealed in the Psalms.

In the Psalms, we are given even more specific language. Here the Lord Jesus Christ calls our sins his own, because "*He hath made him sin for us.*"

PSALM 40

In the fortieth Psalm, the One speaking is beyond all doubt, our Savior. We know that because the Holy Spirit tells us that it is Christ who is speaking here. (Heb. 10:5). He knew that being made sin for us, he would be brought into an horrible pit and filled with distress. Yet, his love for us was and is so great that in verse 7 he declares his readiness to assume a body, and to accomplish his Father's will in the salvation of his chosen, agreeably to the ancient settlements written in the Volume of the Book, saying, — "*Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God.*" Then in verses 11 and 12, he prays for deliverance from his deep distresses.

(Psalms 40:11-12) "*Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. (12) For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*"

This is exactly the same thing we read in John 12:27-28.

(John 12:27-28) “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (28) Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.”

Why was the Son of God brought to such sorrow and grief? Here is the answer. — “*He made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!*” Indeed he could never have suffered the painful, shameful, ignominious death of the cross as our Substitute, had he not been made sin for us. Justice would never have allowed it (Ex. 23:7; Pro. 17:15).

(Exodus 23:7) “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

(Proverbs 17:15) “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.”

Hear the Savior’s words in verse 12, and worship him.

“*For innumerable evils have compassed me about.*” — He was beset on every side with evil. Countless woes compassed our great Substitute and Sin-bearer. Spurgeon said, “Our sins were innumerable, and so were his griefs.” From every quarter, all the accumulated sins of all his people, for all time, in all parts of the world were made to be his! The Blessed One of God, who knew no sin and did no sin, was made sin! Read on. —

“*Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.*” — He had no sin, but sins were laid on him, and he took them as his own. “*He was made sin for us.*” “The transfer of sin to the Savior was real,” Spurgeon wrote, “and produced in him as man the horror which forbade him to look into the face of God, bowing him down with crushing anguish and woe intolerable.”

O my soul, what would our sins have done to us eternally if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all upon himself!

- Oh, blessed Scripture! “The Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all.”
- Oh, marvellous depth of love, that made the perfectly immaculate Lamb of God to stand in the sinner’s place, and bear the horror of great trembling which sin must bring upon those who are forever keenly conscious of it in hell!

“They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” — The pains of God’s holy fury against sin, his unbending justice and unmitigated wrath were beyond calculation, and the Savior’s soul was so crushed with them, that he was sore amazed, and very heavy even unto a sweat of blood. His strength was gone, his spirit sank, he was in an agony.

(Psalms 22:14-15) “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. (15) My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”

GETHSEMANE

It was the thought and anticipation of being made sin for us, not of simply paying the debt due unto our sins, but of being made sin, that caused his bloody sweat in Gethsemane.

GOLGOTHA

It was this fact, the fact that he was made sin for us, that caused him to be forsaken of his Father as he hung upon the cursed tree on Golgotha’s hill.

(Psalms 22:1-3) “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* (2)

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. (3) But thou *art* holy, O *thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”

“Came at length the dreadful night.
Vengeance with its iron rod
Stood, and with collected might
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God,
See, my soul, thy Saviour see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane!”

“Yes, my God bore all my guilt,
This through grace can be believed;
But the horrors which he felt
Are too vast to be conceived.
None can penetrate through thee,
Doleful, dark Gethsemane.”

“Sins against a holy God;
Sins against his righteous laws;
Sins against his love, his blood;
Sins against his name and cause;
Sins immense as is the sea—
Hide me, O Gethsemane!”

David understood what he wrote in this Psalm and was utterly overwhelmed by it.

(Psalms 40:5) “Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.”

PSALM 69

In Psalm 69 we again hear Immanuel calling our sins his own as he hangs upon the cursed tree, suffering the wrath of God for us.

(Psalms 69:1-5) “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul. (2) I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. (3) I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (4) They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away. (5) O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

How could they be “*his*” otherwise than by this act of wondrous justice and grace. — “*He hath made him sin for us!*” As debts are transferred to the surety, our sins were transferred to our Savior. “*Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer*” (Luke 24:46). Since he became voluntarily responsible, “*ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*” (Luke 24:26.)

NEW TESTAMENT

D. This great doctrine is fully attested in the apostolic writings of the New Testament.

All the expressions of the inspired apostolic writers in relation to this subject seem to have a reference to the legal sacrifices. As the animal offered in sacrifice was called sin, because it typically bore transgression, so Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21). When he was made sin, he was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), because he was “*once offered to bear the sins of many*” (Heb. 9: 28).

This one offering was not typical, like the sacrifices of the law, but a real expiation of iniquity. The imputation of sin to our blessed Savior was

not figurative, but real. It was an imputation connected with a real transfer of our iniquities to him (1 Pet. 2:24).

(1 Peter 2:24) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

If there is anything in the Book of God with which we should desire to be acquainted it is this, upon which our salvation and everlasting consolation depend. “*He hath made him sin for us!*” If we would know Christ, and the fellowship of his sufferings; if we would look on him whom we have pierced and mourn; if we would die unto sin, and bring forth fruit unto God, we must have the gift of God the Holy Spirit to reveal to us this great mystery, that God the Father has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all, that “*He hath made him sin for us!*”

Why did the holy Redeemer go mourning to the grave? Why did divine justice pursue him? Only because he bare the sin of many. From this fountain the streams of free salvation flow. We die unto sin, we live unto righteousness, only because he, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. O wondrous grace! O magnificent justice! O mysterious transfer! O amazing mystery!

EITHER, OR

III. *Third*, I want you to see **the importance of this fact.** — “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

I hope that I have more reverence for our God and his Word, and more respect for you, than to make a lot of noise about nothing. This is both a matter of great importance and great consolation, a clearly revealed point of gospel truth that sets before us the mysterious wonder of redemption and the wisdom and glory of God in accomplishing it.

Either the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and our sins were transferred to him, or...

- **He did not bear our sins in his body on the tree, as the Book says he did**, but only the consequences and effects of them.

The Prophet of God says, “*He shall bear their iniquities.*” The word “bear” means “carry,” as a man carries a burden. The Old Testament saints were well acquainted with God our Savior, as a sin-bearing Redeemer God, and considered this to be the glory of his character. Micah said, “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth (beareth) iniquity; and that passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?*” (Micah vii. 18).

- Either the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and our sins were transferred to him, or **he did not really bear the consequences and effects of them**. I mean by that, either he was made sin for us and our sins were transferred to him, or **he did not bear the penalty of them**.

The shame and spitting, the beating and buffeting, the meanness and mockery our holy Savior endured at the hands of the Jews and Roman soldiers, the cross, the nails, and the thorns, were a very small part of the reward of our transgressions. **The principal part of the punishment of sin, consists in a sense of guilt, and of Divine wrath: but neither of these could Immanuel have endured, unless he was made sin, unless he bore our sins themselves.**

- Either the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and our sins were transferred to him, or **our sins are still our sins and justice finds them upon us still!**

The infinite justice of God still finds guilt upon us and upon the saints in glory, too, and must find them upon us forever. If that were the case, justice would still require satisfaction and mercy could be bestowed only at the expense of righteousness.

But, thank God, that is not the case! Here is the great glory of God revealed in the salvation of his elect, as it is set forth in this Book. — The guilt of our sins, and our sins themselves, were forever put away by the sacrifice of his darling Son, washed away completely by the blood of the Lamb!

Here is the glory of his righteousness. — Not only that that he removed the curse, but the cause of the curse also. — “*For as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*”

Our Savior was made sin for us, and our sins were so completely transferred to him, that if he had not conquered and destroyed them, they would have destroyed him. His resurrection is proof that sin is on him no longer. Turn again to Hebrews 9. In verse 26, after showing us that our all-glorious Redeemer, has by the merit of his blood obtained eternal redemption for us and that he is our ever-living High Priest who appears in the presence of God for us, the Apostle Paul declares that he bore our sins and put them away “*by the sacrifice of himself.*”

(Hebrews 9:26) “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Now, look at verse 28. Let me show you something I got from Tobias Crisp.

(Hebrews 9:28) “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Did you catch Paul’s words? He tells us that Christ bore the sins of many. Then he says, “*unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*” — “*He appear the second time*

without sin.” “Mark it well,” Crisp said, “there was a time that Christ did not appear without sin, for he bore the sins of many. But there is a second time when he shall appear, and then he shall be without sin. So that believers have no sins upon them, and Christ hath none either.” What a glorious truth. It is, truly, worth more to our souls than a mountain of gold!

- Either the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and our sins were transferred to him, or **his sufferings were not penal sufferings and the justice of God was not satisfied by them.**

Justice requires that iniquity be punished, but the sufferings of Christ were not punishment, unless our sins were transferred to him, unless he was made sin for us. **An innocent person may suffer, but an innocent person cannot be punished, upon any just ground. And justice will not, indeed cannot allow an innocent person, considered as innocent, to suffer punishment in the room of the guilty, anymore that it can reward a guilty, sinful, corrupt one with life eternal.**^{2[2]}

But, blessed be his name forever, our penal Substitute has fully satisfied his own infinite justice for us, by suffering in our room and stead as One made sin for us, bearing in his own body all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of all his people!

When our Lord Jesus turned the water into wine (John 2), he did not make the water look like wine, or taste like wine, he made the water wine. And when he was made sin for us by his Father laying on him the iniquity of all his elect, he was not made to look like sin, or made merely

^{2[2]} **John Brine**, in a sermon he published on 2 Corinthians 5:21, made this keen observation. — “Penalty is suffering under a charge of offence. Without a just imputation of guilt, punishment cannot in equity be inflicted on any subject. It is a most unrighteous thing to punish any one considered as innocent. Therefore, if it was not possible with God to impute sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict punishment on him. And if Christ did not endure *proper* punishment, his suffering were not, nor could be, satisfactory to the law and justice of God for our sins, and it is in vain to hope for salvation through his sufferings and death.”

to be considered as sin, or even to only be treated as sin. He was made sin!^{3[3]}

BLESSED CONSEQUENCES

IV. Now, stay with me just a few more minutes, and I will show you **some of the blessed, sweet consequences of all this.** — “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

A. Because Christ was made sin for us, because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree and bore them away, **the Lord God almighty declares that all who trust him have no sin** (Ps. 103:12, Mic. 7:18-19; Jer. 50:20; 1 John 3:5).

^{3[3]} The following comments by Martin Luther, as they regard Christ being made sin are precisely the doctrine of Holy Scripture. The words in brackets have been inserted by me.

“And this no doubt all the prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, that ever was or could be in the world. For he, being made a sacrifice for the sins of (his elect throughout) the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sins; but a sinner who has and carries the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and, briefly, who hath and bore all the sins of all men in his body: not that he himself committed them, but for that he received them, being committed or done of us, and laid them upon his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood.

Therefore, this general sentence of Moses comprehends him also, (albeit in his own person he was innocent,) because it found him amongst sinners and transgressors; like as the magistrate takes him for a thief, and punishes him, whom he finds among other thieves and transgressors, though he never committed any thing worthy of death. When the law, therefore, found him among thieves, it condemned and killed him as a thief.

If you deny him to be a sinner and accursed, deny also that he was crucified and was dead. But if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say that he was accursed, and of all sinners the greatest.

God, our most merciful Father, sent his only Son into the world, and laid upon him all the sins of all (his elect), saying, You be Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner who did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief who hung upon the cross; and, briefly, you be the person who has committed all the sins of all (my people). See, therefore, that you pay and satisfy for them.”

(Psalms 103:12) “As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

(Jeremiah 50:20) “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be* none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”

(Micah 7:18-19) “Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth (beareth) iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. (19) He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

(1 John 3:5) “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

B. Because “*He hath made him sin for us*” **all who believe on the Son of God are made “*the righteousness of God in him*”** (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Do you remember what I told you about the first word translated “made” in verse 21 as it relates to Christ being made sin? — It is not a legal

term, but a word that carries the idea of “create.” It is in the past tense and implies that he who was made sin for us was personally involved in the work means, “by one act gather together and cause to be.” Paul is telling us that God the Father, by one great, mysterious act, gathered together all the sins of all his elect throughout all the ages of time, and caused his darling Son to be sin for us.

But when he tells us that we are “*made the righteousness of God in him*” another word is used for “*made*.” When he speaks of us being “*made the righteousness of God in him*,” the word Paul uses for “*made*” is another word altogether. It is a present tense, passive verb, implying total passiveness on our part and means “continually cause to become.” Paul is telling us that those for whom Christ was made sin God continually causes to become the righteousness of God in him without doing a thing.

“Mark it well, Christ himself is not so completely righteous, but we are as righteous as he was. Nor are we so completely sinful, but he became (being made sin) as completely sinful as we. Nay more, the righteousness that Christ hath with the Father, we are the same, for we are ‘*made the righteousness of God.*’ And that very sinfulness that we were, Christ is made before God. So that here is a direct change, Christ takes our persons and condition, and stands in our stead. We take his person and condition, and stand in his stead. What the Lord beheld Christ to be, that he beholds his members to be. What he beholds them to be in themselves, that he beheld Christ himself to be.

So that if you would speak of a sinner, supposing him to be a member of Christ, you must not speak of what he manifests, but of what Christ was.

If you would speak of one completely righteous, you must speak and know that Christ himself is not more righteous than he is. And that that person is not more sinful than Christ

was when he took his sins on him. So that if you will reckon well, beloved, you must always reckon yourself in another's person, and that other in yours. And until the Lord find out transgressions of Christ's own acting, he will never find one to charge upon you."

(Tobias Crisp)

C. Because the Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah's Righteous Servant, has fully obeyed his Father's will in putting away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, because he was made sin for us, because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, because he paid all the debt for our sins and put them away completely and forever, he now assures sinners everywhere of this glorious truth by the gospel. — "*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*" (John 6:37-40).

(John 6:37-40) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Come to Christ, no matter who you are, no matter how vile your transgressions are, and he promises that he will receive you, just as you are, and that he will never cast you out, that he will give you eternal life, that you shall never perish. Come, then, to Christ...

- Without preparations.
- Without change to qualify you.
- Without delay.

Sinners, come and welcome!

(Matthew 11:28-30) “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”

Is there a sinner here? I am talking about a sinner. Is there a sinner in this house?

“To understand these terms aright,
This grand distinction should be known —
Tho’ all are sinners in God’s sight,
There are but few so in their own.
To such as these our Lord was sent:
They’re only sinners who repent.

What comfort can a Savior bring
To those who never felt their woe?
A sinner is a sacred thing;
The Holy Ghost has made him so.
New life from Him we must receive
Before for our sin we rightly grieve.”

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

Amen.