

Romans 5:6–11

Our Security in God pt. 9

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17–21 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not

imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be sin* for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Introduction

It began with one of history's earliest recorded instances of biological warfare. In 1347 a Mongol army besieging the Genoese trading post of Caffa in the Crimea (modern Ukraine) catapulted the bodies of bubonic plague victims over the town's walls. The terrified defenders fled to Italy, carrying with them the deadly plague bacteria (and the rats and fleas that spread them). Over the next three years the plague spread throughout Europe in the massive epidemic now known as the Black Death. Before the epidemic ran its course an estimated twenty million people—approximately one-third to one-half of Europe's population—perished. The coming centuries would see recurring outbreaks of the

bubonic plague, which would remain a dangerous, unchecked killer until the development of antibiotics in the twentieth century.

Though the Black Death is the most infamous epidemic in history, it was not the only one. The influenza epidemic of 1918–19 killed an estimated thirty to fifty million people, and several million more died at about that same time in an outbreak of typhus in eastern Europe. Other infectious diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, and in more recent times AIDS, have also claimed uncounted millions of victims.

But there is one plague that is more widespread and deadly than all others combined; it is, as the Puritan writer Ralph Venning called it, the “plague of plagues.” It affects every person who ever lived—and is 100 percent fatal. Unlike other plagues, which cause only physical death, this plague causes spiritual and eternal death as well. It is the plague of sin.

Because Adam’s fall plunged the entire human race into sin (Rom. 5:12–21), all people are sinners from birth. “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,” lamented David, “and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5). In Psalm 58:3 he added, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth” (cf. Gen. 8:21; Isa. 48:8). Not

only are all people sinners by nature, they are also sinners by action. To the Romans Paul wrote, “There is none righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10; cf. Pss. 14:1–3; 53:1–3). Later in that chapter he added, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23); consequently, “there is no man who does not sin” (1 Kings 8:46), and no one can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin” (Prov. 20:9).

The inevitable outcome for all those infected by the sin plague is death. Ezekiel 18:20 states plainly, “The person who sins will die” (cf. v. 4). Adam’s tragic epitaph, “and he died” (Gen. 5:5) will be written for all his descendants (cf. vv. 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31; 9:29). Nor is the prognosis any better in the spiritual realm. Sin produces two disastrous spiritual consequences: alienation from God in this life (Eph. 2:12; 4:18; Col. 1:21), and unrelenting punishment in hell in eternity (Matt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:9–11; 20:11–15).

But the good news of the gospel is that there is a cure for the sinner infected by the deadly sin epidemic. God, in His mercy and love, provided a remedy for sin—the sacrifice of His Son. The Lord Jesus Christ “released us from our sins by His blood” (Rev. 1:5), “for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb.

10:14). Those who experience “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of [their] trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7) are cured from sin’s deadly spiritual effects. As a result, they have “passed out of death into life” (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14), and “are no longer strangers and aliens, but ... are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household” (Eph. 2:19).

How God made the cure possible is the theme of verses 18–20. In those three verses, Paul described the glorious truth of reconciliation—that the sin-severed relationship between holy God and unregenerate sinners can be restored “through” and “in” Christ. But reconciliation raises some profound questions. How can an absolutely and infinitely holy God be reconciled to sinners? How can His just and holy law, which demands the condemnation and punishment of all who violate it, be satisfied? How can those who deserve no mercy receive it? How can God uphold true righteousness and give grace? How can the demands of both justice and love be met? How can God be both “just and the justifier” (Rom. 3:26) of sinners?

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). [2 Corinthians](#) (pp. 210–211). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Review

Lesson:

1. The Starter
2. The Savior
3. The Substitution
4. The Satisfaction

I. The Starter

21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν **ἐποίησεν**, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

21 For He the antecedent of “He” is God the Father of v. 20

made

ἐποίησεν

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Active

Original Word: ποιέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: poieó

to be the author of a thing

to (make i. e.) constitute or appoint one anything

to make ready, to prepare

to be the author of, to cause:

God is the initiator of reconciliation, not man

Reconciliation is His plan, and it could not occur unless He initiated and applied it. Sinners cannot devise their own religious approach to God, because they are “dead in [their] trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). The damning lie of false religion is that man can reconcile himself to God by his own efforts, but all attempts to do so are futile.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). *2 Corinthians* (p. 211). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Not even the “Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the

promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:4–5) could devise a way to reconcile themselves to God by their own efforts. **Romans 10:1–3**, expressing Paul’s deep concern for them, reflects that truth:

Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). *2 Corinthians* (p. 211). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Acts 2:22–23 (NKJV)

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Acts 13:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him.

Matthew 26:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Luke 22:22 (NKJV)

²² And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

John 18:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

Hebrews 10:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

*“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.*

⁶ *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
You had no pleasure.*

⁷ *Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—*

To do Your will, O God.’ ”

Only God could design an atonement for sin that would satisfy the demands of His justice, propitiate His wrath, and be consistent with His love, grace, and mercy. Only God could conceive the plan in which the second person of the Trinity would, “being found in appearance as a man, [humble] Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). Only God knew what it would take to rescue sinners “from the domain of darkness, and [transfer them] to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:13), making them “qualified ... to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light” (Col. 1:12). Only God knew how to make sinners deserving of hell acceptable in His sight and fit to spend eternity in His presence. Therefore, only God could author and execute the plan of redemption and reconcile sinners to Himself. That plan is so utterly beyond the comprehension of the unregenerate that it seems foolishness to them (1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:14). No religion of human design has anything like it.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). [2 Corinthians](#) (p. 212). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Romans 8:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Reconciliation flows out of God's love;

John 3:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

It is this emphasis on a loving God reaching out to sinners that sets Christianity apart from the false religions of the world. The gods of those religions are sometimes depicted as cruel, angry, and hostile and hence to be feared and appeased—even by such appalling means as child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kings 16:3; 23:10; Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 16:21; 23:37)

Reconciliation required the death of God's Son because "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23) and therefore, "The person who sins will die" (Ezek. 18:20). The slaughter of countless millions of sacrificial animals under the Old Testament economy graphically illustrated that truth.

Though unable to atone for sin, since "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:4), those sacrifices forcibly drove home the point that sin results in death, and death is required to satisfy the demands of God's law when it is violated

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). *2 Corinthians* (p. 213). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

II. The Savior

²¹ For He made **Him who knew no sin** to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

This designation points unmistakably to the only possible sacrifice for sin.

It eliminates every human who ever lived, “for there is no man who does not sin” (1 Kings 8:46), since

“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). *2 Corinthians* (pp. 213–214). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin
τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν

knew no sin

γνόντα

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

Original Word: γινώσκω

Transliteration: ginóskó

Definition: I am taking in knowledge, come to know, learn; aor: I ascertained, realized.

1097 *ginóskō* – properly, *to know*, especially through *personal experience (first-hand acquaintance)*. **1097** / *ginóskō* ("experientially know") is used for example in Lk 1:34, "And Mary [a virgin] said to the angel, 'How will this be since I do not *know* (**1097** / *ginóskō* = sexual intimacy) a man?'"

In the design of God, the second person of the Trinity became a man (Gal. 4:4–5). The Bible makes it clear that though He had a human mother, the Lord Jesus Christ did not have a human father. Joseph is never referred to as His father, because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35). As the God-man, He was the perfect One to be the sacrifice for sin

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). [2 Corinthians](#) (p. 214). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

The impeccability (sinlessness) of Jesus Christ is universally affirmed in Scripture, by believers and unbelievers alike

John 8:46 (NKJV)

46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

Luke 23:4 (NKJV)

4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no fault in this Man.”

Luke 23:39–41 (NKJV)

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? **41** And we indeed justly, for we receive

the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.”

Acts 3:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

1 Peter 1:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 2:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² *“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

1 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

1 John 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

Hebrews 7:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

But the most powerful testimony concerning Christ's sinlessness comes from God the Father. On two occasions He said of Christ, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). Jesus' unbroken fellowship with the Father also testifies to His sinlessness; in John 10:30 He said simply, "I and the Father are one" (cf. 14:9).

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III. The Substitution

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin **to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

The words “to be” are not in the Greek. “Sin” here is the substantive, not the verb. God “treated as sin” the one “who knew no sin.”

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (2 Co 5:21). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

That important phrase requires a careful understanding.

It does not mean that Christ became a sinner; the above-mentioned verses establishing His utter sinlessness unequivocally rule out that possibility.

As God in human flesh, He could not possibly have committed any sin or in any way violated God’s law.

It is equally unthinkable that God, whose “eyes are too pure to approve evil” (Hab. 1:13; cf. James 1:13), would make anyone a sinner, let alone His own Holy Son. He was the unblemished Lamb while on the cross, personally guilty of no evil.

Isaiah 53:4–6 describes the only sense in which Jesus could have been made sin:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But He was pierced through for our
transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.

Galatians 3:10,13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, *“Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”*¹³ *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),*

Romans 5:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Christ was not made a sinner, nor was He punished for any sin of His own.

___ Instead, the Father treated him as if He were a sinner by charging to His account the sins of everyone who would ever believe.

All those sins were charged against Him as if He had personally committed them, and He was punished with the penalty for them on the cross, experiencing the full fury of God's wrath unleashed against them all.

It was at that moment that "Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ... **'My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?'** " (Matt. 27:46).

It is crucial, therefore, to understand that the only sense in which **Jesus was made sin was by imputation.**

___ He was personally pure, yet officially culpable; personally holy, yet forensically guilty. But in dying on the cross Christ did not become evil like we are, nor do redeemed sinners become inherently as holy as He is. God credits believers' sin to Christ's account, and His righteousness to theirs.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin **to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν **ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν**
ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη
 Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

2 Corinthians 5:17–20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has **reconciled us** to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has **given us** the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world** to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has **committed to us** the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, **we are ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were pleading **through us**: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Christ's substitutionary death **was efficacious only for those who would believe** (John 1:12; 3:16–18; Rom. 10:9–10);

John 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

John 3:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Romans 10:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says,

“Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

IV. The Satisfaction

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, **ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.**

The phrase **so that** reflects a purpose clause in the Greek text. The benefit of God’s imputing believers’ sins to Christ and His righteousness to them is that they **become** righteous before Him.

They are “found in Him, not having a righteousness of [their] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9).

The very **righteousness** God requires before He can accept the sinner is the very righteousness He provides.

Because Jesus paid the full penalty for believers' sin, God no longer holds it against them.

In Psalm 32:1 David wrote, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). [2 Corinthians](#) (p. 216). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Psalm 130:3–4 (NKJV)

- 3 If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
4 But *there is* forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.

Psalm 103:12 (NKJV)

- 12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Isaiah 38:17 (NKJV)

- 17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit
of corruption,

For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

Isaiah 43:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ “I, *even I, am* He who blots out your transgressions
for My own sake;
And I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 44:22 (NKJV)

²² I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your
transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”

Micah 7:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea.

The Great purpose of the work of Reconciliation and
Imputation

Romans 8:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, **He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,** that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Ephesians 1:3–4 (NKJV)

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,**