

Are Our Future Sins Forgiven?

What did Jesus mean when He said, "*It is finished*"?
(John 19:30).

In John 19:29-30, after He had a drink of sour wine, Jesus said, "*It is finished*," and this is thought by many to mean that a Christian's past, present and future sins are all finished with, all forgiven.

But what was Jesus referring to when He said, "*It is finished*"?

When Jesus drank the sour wine, He was fulfilling the prophecy about Himself in Psa. 69:21. It was immediately after fulfilling this prophecy that He said, "*It is finished*," and He said this because His earthly sufferings and agonies were over at last; while on the earth, He had fulfilled all that was written about Himself in the Law and the Prophets. To finalise His work of redemption, all that was left for Him to do was to give up His Spirit and die, which He did immediately, and then later present His blood in the heavenly Holy Place (Heb. 9:11-12). After this, having died for the sins of the world, forgiveness of sins was available to all mankind through repenting and believing in Him.

So, when Jesus said, "*It is finished*,"

- He was not saying that our past, present and future sins were forgiven.
- He was not saying that our future sins were not relevant to our salvation.
- He was not saying that sin was no longer an issue in a Christian's life.
- In fact, He was not saying anything about the forgiveness of any individual's sins.

What He was saying was that His personal, earthly work was finished. Then, after dying and presenting His blood in heaven, His full work of redemption was completed. This work of redemption, by itself, does not bring forgiveness of anyone's sins but makes provision for forgiveness through repentance.

Jesus' death on the cross is a past, finished act while our salvation is a present, ongoing act. 2 Pet. 1:9 and Rom. 3:25 say that our past sins are forgiven but no verse says that our present or future sins are forgiven. Rather, 1 John 1:9 tells us that only *if* we confess our sins will we be forgiven ... note the word "if". If we confess our sins, we receive forgiveness because Jesus acts as our Advocate and pleads our case (1 John 2:1). However, if we rebelliously refuse to repent then we will not have an Advocate in Jesus and will not be forgiven but will face condemnation.

Jesus said, "*I tell you the truth, everyone [which includes you and I] who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*" (John 8:34-36). Jesus assures us that we can be set free from sin and no longer be like a slave who has no permanent place in the family; we can be sons who belong to it forever. 2 Pet. 1:3-4 tell us that we have no excuse for continuing in sin but can be set free because we have Divine Power, through the Holy Spirit, to live a godly life and escape the corruption of the world.

This does not mean that we will be sinlessly perfect; we may sin from time to time but we will not be in slavery to an ongoing, sinful lifestyle. Put another way, weakness or circumstances may cause us to sin occasionally but we will not set out with sin in mind, nor jump into sin feet first.

So, when Jesus said "*It is finished*," He was not saying that a Christian's present or future sins were automatically forgiven. To receive forgiveness, we need to confess and repent whenever the Holy Spirit convicts us (John 16:8). When we are led by the Spirit, we will have God's peace as Rom. 8:6 tells us: "*The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*" Where there is sin there is no peace so, if you lack God's peace, I encourage you to seek it by following the Spirit's leading and confess as necessary. Amen.

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