

# Crime & Punishment. Law and Justice.



## Someone must pay.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

If there is a law that says that it is not allowed to drive a vehicle over 20 miles an hour near a school, then we expect that those who break that law, and are caught doing so, would be punished. If there were no penalty, then the law would be in-effective. If there was no sign indicating the limit, then drivers could be forgiven for driving at whatever speed they wished.

But when there is a sign, then drivers know what speed they should be driving at and know that if caught breaking the speed limit they will be punished. This is how the law works.

A clear warning of what is not permissible. The sure knowledge that every breaking of the law will result in punishment.

If there were no penalty for driving at 50mph near the school in spite of the signs giving the limit of 20mph then some drivers would drive at any speed they liked. That is sadly just human nature.

To keep some semblance of decency God has written His law in the conscience of all humanity.

Those who keep that law which is in their conscience are to be commended.

Rom 2:12 For as many as have sinned without the law (represented by the ten commandments) shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles (non-Jews), which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves: Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;)

Unfortunately it is impossible that any of us have kept this law fully.

We all appear to have double standards. One for ourselves and one for others. Sin should be punished, but perhaps not mine.

A woman was caught in the act of adultery and brought by the experts in the law to the Lord Jesus Christ for him to condemn her. It would seem that those who break the law would like to draw attention away from themselves and on to others caught in the act! John 8: 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said to them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. John 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said to her, Woman, where are those your accusers? Has no man condemned you? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said to her, neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.

The Lord Jesus Christ made it plain that he had not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. This offended those experts of the law who genuinely believed they were more righteous than others.

Romans 3: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

When in a house and folks lowered a paralysed man on a stretcher down through a hole in the roof so Jesus could heal him, Jesus told the sick man; Luke 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said to him, Man, your sins are remitted (forgiven- paid in full). The experts in the law were very upset at this; Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said to them; what do you reason in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy,) I say to you, Arise, and take up your couch, and go into your house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

While we in ourselves can do nothing to remove our sins God has Himself prepared a Way through the offering of His own Son Jesus the Christ on the cross.

Speaking of the Christ to come, Jesus; Isa 53: Surely he has borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief: when you shall make his soul an offering for sin.

Mat 16:21 From that time forward Jesus began to show to his disciples how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission (removal - forgiveness) of sins.

Luke 24:46 And Jesus said to them, so it is written, and so it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins in His name should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ, the spotless, sinless Lamb of God has born the punishment for all the sins of all humanity for all time in His body, the Word made flesh, on the cross where He was crucified. He made His flesh, His life, an offering for sin; His blood a ransom to pay the debt of sin. God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself. God's justice has been satisfied through the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. 2Co 5 And all things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing (reckoning) their trespasses to them. If you owe me £100,000 and are unable to pay, and I forgive you, you would be relieved but still feel guilt. If someone else who has unlimited funds gives me the money on your behalf to pay the debt you owe me, I am satisfied, you are no long in my debt and you would not feel guilty about the debt which was paid in full. The debt has been paid – remitted; this is remission of sins. With His blood Jesus paid the debt we owe to God so we can have a clean conscience towards God.

Acts 10:42 and he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he (Jesus) which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins.

In the light of this tremendous act of grace on the behalf of God, the offended party, what should we sinners do?

Repent. Meaning change of intention, mind, thought or will. Abandoning our thoughts and ways so we can have God's thoughts and ways.

Act 2:38 Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Repentance is owning up to our sins and gladly putting the yoke of Christ upon ourselves and following Him Who is our hope.

His first command to those who receive His word to repent is to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission, forgiveness, removal of sins. He died so our sins could be remitted – paid in full. The remission Jesus paid for with His blood is effected in the one who truly repents by his being baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. As Saul was instructed by Ananias, sent by Jesus to tell Saul 'what he must do':

Act 22:16 and now why are you waiting? Get up, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

We have the promise that if we repent and obey by being baptised in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins we shall receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit. When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit we are sanctified (set apart) to God and justified (made to behave righteously) by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. So we have not only justice and removal of our sins in the name of Jesus Christ but power for rehabilitation also. By these means we are enabled to leave our old lives, take up our cross daily and follow the Lord Jesus. He will instruct and teach us by His Spirit. What are we waiting for?

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