

LORD'S DAY 5

Q12. According to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both now and in eternity: how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

A. God requires that his justice be satisfied.¹ Therefore the claims of this justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.²

1. Exod. 20:5 – "You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me"
- 23:7 – "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty."
2. Rom. 8:3–4 – "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Q13. Can we make this payment ourselves?

A. Certainly not. Actually, we increase our debt every day.¹

1. Job 9:3 – "If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand."
- 15:15 – "God puts no trust even in his holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in his sight;"
- Matt. 6:12 – "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Q14. Can another creature—any at all—pay this debt for us?

A. No. To begin with, God will not punish any other creature for what a human is guilty of.¹

Furthermore, no mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.²

1. Heb. 2:14 – "Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,"
2. Ps. 130 – "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord; my soul waits, and in his word, I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities."

Q15. What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?

A. One who is a true¹ and righteous human,² yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.³

1. 1 Cor. 15:21 – "For since death came through a human, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human,"
2. Jer. 33:15 – "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."
- Isa. 53:9 – "They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth."
- Ps. 53 – "Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt; they commit abominable acts; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one. Have they no knowledge, those evildoers, who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon God? There they shall be in great terror, in terror such as has not been. For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly; they will be put to shame, for God has rejected them. O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When God restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad."
- 2 Cor. 5:21 – "For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
3. Heb. 7:[15–]16 – "It is even more obvious when another priest arises, resembling Melchizedek, 16 one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent but through the power of an indestructible life. " Isa. 7:14 – "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel."
- Rom. 8:3 – "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,"
- Jer. 23:6 – "In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"