

YOU ARE COMPLETE in HIM.

COLOSSIANS 2:10 NOV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

Debt Canceled

Indebtedness is a tremendously heavy burden. The proverb is indeed true: "The borrower becomes the lender's slave" (Proverbs 22:7). Those who have labored under the burden of debt have a good idea of what it would be like for all the past bills and borrowed money suddenly to be forgiven. No debt, no hold-over interest—everything paid in full! God, the ultimate teacher, allows indebtedness to occur in the physical realm to communicate what happens in the spiritual realm. The idea is that when a person sins against God he has placed himself in the position of such spiritual

indebtedness that he cannot ever repay. Jesus, for example, told a parable of a slave who owed his king 10,000 talents. When he was, of course, unable to repay, the king graciously forgave him the debt. That slave, however, had a fellow slave who owed him 100 copper pennies, and threw him into debtor's prison until he would repay. When the king found out about the situation, he called the first slave into his presence, and angrily threw him into prison because of his unwillingness to forgive a fellow slave a small debt when he himself had been forgiven such a large debt. "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you," said Jesus, "if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35). The point is clear, that monetary debt is used to paint a picture of spiritual indebtedness occurring because of sin against God.

- ▼ **Certificate of debt** — God, with tremendous power, is able to take people who are spiritually dead, forgive their sins, and make them spiritually alive as they come up out of the waters of immersion into Christ. The apostle Paul makes a point of emphasizing that He has "forgiven us *all* our transgressions." He then expands upon that, saying that He has "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us" (Colossians 2:14). The decrees registering against each person are the commandments of God enfolded into the beginning portion of the gospel. "Now we know that whatever the Law says," intoned Paul to the Romans, "it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). The early portion of preaching the gospel is to bring the previously unaware to a knowledge of the righteous requirement of God revealed in the Law, and to establish to the individual that he has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Therefore, in accordance with the well-communicated plan of the All Wise, the now informed sinner recognizes his need for the Savior. But the decrees are hostile; they not only show him that he is a sinner, but also that they condemn him to eternal death for his violation of these standards; they present him with the certificate of an insurmountable debt. But, praise God, through Jesus' gospel, this certificate can be canceled.

- ▼ **Certificate nailed to the cross** — When the paperwork disappears, there is no crime! Cases can only be tried for which there is a record of the violation. Debt can only be collected when there is the proper paperwork trail. So of this certificate of debt against the sinner, "He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14). By the power of God, in the spiritual realm not seen by the physical eye, the paperwork of indebtedness has perished on the cross with Jesus.

This is a powerful and life-giving principle, that the past for the one now called a saint is gone! There is no hold-over from the past preventing progress in the present. But as powerful and life-giving as that is, it is weaker than the next step revealed in the picture of God. Forgiveness is for the past; what provides power for the future?

**THE PAPERWORK OF
SPIRITUAL INDEBTED-
NESS HAS PERISHED
ON THE CROSS OF
CHRIST.**

JAY WILSON