



A Debt We Could Never Pay

John 19:28-37

At this writing, our national debt stands at 27 trillion dollars and climbing. To pay back this debt, every man, woman, and child in America would have to contribute \$82,300.00. If a dollar

were paid toward the debt every second, it would take more than 855 millenniums to pay off this debt. How could we ever pay this gargantuan debt?

As individuals before a holy God, we also have an enormous debt that we can never pay. We have failed to meet our obligations to God (*Rom. 3:10,23*). We have broken God’s righteous law (*John 7:19*). We have earned for ourselves the death penalty (*Rom. 6:23*). The Lord sent His beloved Son into this world to pay our debt and to suffer the death penalty in our place: “For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just (the righteous One) for the unjust (the unrighteous ones) that He might bring us to God” (*1 Pet. 3:18*).

Christ came to pay a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. He took our sins so that we could receive God’s righteousness: “For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (*2 Cor. 5:21*).

According to Roman law, when a person was put in prison, the certificate of debt was nailed to the door, remaining there until the sentence was carried out. Then the authorities would take this certificate and write across it the word meaning “*It is finished.*” The certificate would be given to the prisoner, and he could never be punished for those crimes again. Jesus’ victory cry, “It is finished” signifies “paid in full” (*John 19:30*). Jesus took our certificate of debt and wrote across it in His own blood, “Paid in full”!

~George Zeller:

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