

# What the Bible Says About SIN

by Stan Cox



A discussion of sin is very important to anyone who has a belief in God. If you accept the existence of a Creator, your next major concern is pleasing Him. Consider...an Omniscient, Omnipotent Being is responsible for your existence. Your continued well-being is totally dependent upon His whim. Is it not in your best interest to determine what He desires of you, what is acceptable and unacceptable to Him?

Sin, put as simply as possible, is that which is unacceptable to God. It is what angers God. It is what separates man from God, and from the possibility of ultimate happiness. Since the Bible is the word of God, it is logical to go to it to find out about sin. This is an important initial point. If you want to know what sin is, and what things are sinful, you must go to God to find out...NOT MAN.

Many do not believe that dressing immodestly is sin. Others go so far as to think there is nothing sinful about lying, getting drunk, gambling, or cursing. Abortion, Homosexuality, Racism, etc., you can always find someone who will deny such things are sinful. But it is not important what man may think about such things. The question must be, "What does the Bible say about sin?" It is only in asking this question that we can know what God considers sinful. And it is only in knowing what God considers sinful that we can ensure we are pleasing to Him.

DEFINITION:

The Greek word translated "sin" in the Bible is an interesting term. It, (hamartano), literally means, "to miss the mark." Think of it in this way. In shooting an arrow from a bow, if your arrow flies beyond the target or falls short of it, if it veers to the right of the target or to the left, you "miss the mark." If in our lives we go beyond the will of God, doing things God has said not to do; if we fall short of the will of God by not doing things commanded by God; if we veer away from God's will, doing things for which we have no authority; we "miss the mark" or SIN.

As John states in 1 John 3:4, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Sin is lawlessness. God has revealed to us His law or will. The Bible is the final authority on sin and its consequences.

#### A LIST OF SINS

So, what is and what is not sinful? The Bible lists many things that are sinful in God's eyes. One such list is found in Galatians 5, where the apostle Paul identifies them as works of the flesh. Beginning with verse 19, he states, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

We should not consider such lists as exhaustive. Note that Paul ends his list with the phrase, "and the like". More important, I think, is the contention Paul makes that the works of the flesh (sins) are "evident". They are obvious. Anything that is in conflict with the nature of God and His will is sinful. His nature and will are revealed plainly in the Bible, and as such those things that are contrary to Him are plain as well. There is an objective standard. We can know the difference between right and wrong. And after determining the difference, we ought to be careful to avoid all sin. Paul's question in 2 Corinthians 6:14, is a rhetorical one. He states, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" Righteousness has NO fellowship with lawlessness, and claims of righteousness are legitimate only if we shirk sin.

## THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

Sin is serious. It is a malignancy. It is repugnant to God, and carries with it unpleasant consequences. The children of Israel in Isaiah's day were complaining about God's remoteness. Isaiah answered them by writing, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). This is an important point. God is the giver of life. Sin, in separating you from God, separates you from life. That is why Paul rejoiced in Colossians 2:13 that, "You, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." All are "dead" in their trespasses until they receive forgiveness. To remain in sin, and to die physically without having sin forgiven, is to consign yourself to an eternal death and punishment.

The Old Testament provides a litany of examples regarding the consequences of sin.

\* Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, and denied access to the tree of life because of their sin (Genesis 3).

\* The ancient world was destroyed by a great Flood as a result of the wickedness of the day (Genesis 6-8).

\* The ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven because of the abomination of homosexuality (Genesis 19).

\* Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire which "went out from the Lord", because they offered up as a part of their worship fire not authorized by God (Leviticus 10).

\* Israel was sentenced to wander in the wilderness for a generation because they refused to enter Canaan (Numbers 14).

\* Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan after he presumptuously disobeyed God by striking the rock at Kadesh (Numbers 20).

\* Israel was defeated in her battle with the small city of Ai as punishment for Achan's disobedience in stealing forbidden treasure (Joshua 7).

\* The pattern stated in Judges 2:11, after the death of Joshua, "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals", was repeated many times throughout the nation's history. This resulted in many judgments and punishments of the nation by Jehovah.

We are told that these events are recorded for us to serve as

examples. Note Jude's statement, "But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, ARE SET FORTH AS AN EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 1:5-7).

It is obvious from the above that there are many physical consequences to sin. It only takes a cursory look at our society today to see the truth of that observation. AIDS, crime, teenage pregnancy, anarchy, and drug abuse are rampant on the social front. Greed, dishonesty, and slander are the order of the day in government and business. Division and the rejection of bible truths is characteristic of religious denominations in our times. All of these things have figured prominently in destroying the homes and individual lives of so many. The devil has been thorough in his work.

However, the spiritual consequences of sin are even more devastating. Remember what Paul said of the end of those who practice the works of the flesh, "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). There are only two destinations in eternity. Those who do not inherit the kingdom of God have HELL as their perpetual abode. Hell is described as a place where the "worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44). A place of "outer darkness" where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12). Surely the eternal destiny of those separated from God by sin underscores the seriousness of the offense.

## THE CURE FOR SIN

Perhaps the most important fact about sin is its universality. Paul stated in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In effect, all of us are guilty, and as such face eternal separation from God. All who sin are worthy of death. Because God loves each of us so much, and does not want any to perish, he made the ultimate sacrifice. He sent His Son to die in our place. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Because God is just, the penalty for sin had to be paid. Because He cares for us, he sent His Son to pay that ultimate price. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be

sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus is our cure for sin.

#### AN APPEAL

Dear reader, your eternal well-being is at stake. Sin is a disease, a great spiritual cancer. It leads to death, but there is possibility of rebirth. Have you been born again? Jesus told Nicodemus that, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The Jews on Pentecost, as recorded by Luke in Acts 2, realized their spiritual condition. They were sinners, guilty of crucifying Jesus. Because of Peter's teaching, they believed that "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (vs. 36). Taking up the inspired narrative in verse 37, we read, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (38) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Have you repented of your sins, and been baptized to have them washed away? Can you look forward to standing before the judgment seat of Christ, secure in the knowledge that the guilt of sin has been removed through the blood of the Savior? If not, I pray that you will turn to Christ, and have your sins forgiven, before it is everlastingly too late.

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Contact the writer at:  
LStanCox@aol.com