

Article of the Month  
October, 2022

## ***Sin***

It could be that the word "sin" is associated in many minds with some zealous Christian, or Muslim, or other misdirected zealot, pointing at some and telling them that because of their sins they will be consigned to some sort of eternity of misery. DO AWAY with that thinking immediately! Let's talk Scripturally and rationally; and let's make "sin" a serious but not finger-pointing subject. Let's take the emotion out of the word and put understanding into it instead.

### IS THIS A RELIGIOUS WORD?

Outside of a religious context, it is highly unlikely that the word "sin" will ever occur in a conversation. It IS inseparably connected to religion. Finding WHY that is the case is the best place to begin in the consideration of the subject.

First, look at the word in the context NOT of an individual, but in the context of the vastness of the universe. THAT is where the word will eventually become vital. If there is ever to be a universe in which EVERYTHING works, it will mean that there can be absolutely no violation of a law that insures peace, harmony, tranquillity, and trust. And that obedience to law must be by devoted willingness -- not merely by a feeling of responsibility, and certainly not by begrudging obedience! "Sin," by definition, is the violation of THAT universal law. But its violations have different results at different times until all will be in harmony.

This is all reliant on a God who is so perfect as to deserve the respect of all -- a God who can never make any kind of mistake, and who has the perfect implicit and explicit trust of all of His thinking creation. When this will be the case, what He says will be law; what He says will be gratefully and willingly assented to and obeyed by all of His intelligent creation on any plane of existence -- human or spiritual. It is manifest that we HAVE NOT YET reached that kind of condition! And mankind and angels will not reach it by their own efforts. But since that law will not ultimately be permitted to be broken, and since "sin" is a word which means to break it, "sin" is, indeed, a religious word because it relates to the Law of God.

### THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

The ONLY way that all of intelligent creation will come to that common assent to a given law is by having them experience and/or witness and comprehend the terrible results of the lack of that devotion to good. That is where things stand at this moment.

## Return to 2022 Index

The whole creation is groaning together in pain. (Romans 8:22) Men and angels are all learning the exceedingly terrible results of living without mutual assent to a perfect law. It cannot have escaped our collective attention that we really want something better!

By permitting evil, God has done a most marvelous thing for us all. He is creating the understanding by which we will be able to function in perfection. Only God will be able to define what is good. Despite God's will that we all be "free moral agents," there will be no negotiations about such definitions! "Good" will be defined by the Creator. He, alone, does and will know what will work for the flawless good of all beings. No one else can set those standards. And now, while evil is yet being permitted free rein, man's insistence in forcing obedience by others to the ways he personally sees things is only harming matters all the more. People are killing people in the name of religion and ideology! Some actually think this is GOOD! But the results speak for themselves.

### SIN DEFINED

With this much discussion, we can now define "sin" clearly. Sin is the violation of the Divine Law. It matters not if the violation is infinitesimally small or incredibly grand; ANY violation is sin. And, EVENTUALLY, any sin will be punishable by *extinction*. After all, any violation of the Divine Law will (as we are witnessing) plunge the universe into chaos -- a condition simply unacceptable to God who wants happiness, welfare, and eternal life for all of His intelligent creatures.

So, yes. "Sin" is a religious word because its definition is the breaking of the Divine Law. But sin NOW is different from sin later. We need an explanation:

There apparently WAS NO SIN prior to Satan's leading of man into disobedience (Genesis 3). Prior to that time, no being had ever even conceived of challenging a law under which everything was working so well.

Adam's sin was unique in that it was CONFINED TO HIM as far as responsibility goes -- even though its results have passed down to all of his progeny. It is, to this day, Scripturally considered the one "original sin" among mankind. God could not excuse it. We would have no respect for a God who wavers in His positions. It carried the death penalty in order to show the seriousness of breaking the Divine Law. But, because it was ONE sin, it could be "paid for" by the ONE sacrificial death of a SUBSTITUTE. THAT was the point of Jesus' "ransom" sacrifice. (I Timothy 2:5, 6) As all have died IN ADAM, so also shall all IN CHRIST be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:21, 22) It was strictly a one-for-one (life-for-life) exchange to God's justice which will eventually release Adam and his race from the death penalty.

The Apostle Paul (Romans 5:12-14) makes it abundantly plain that all of Adam's descendants (the whole human race) -- while they ALL HAVE SINNED due to the imperfection inherited from their original father -- do not have their sins imputed to them! This is a seriously remarkable thought! God arranged it legally that only one

## Return to 2022 Index

human life carried the responsibility for death so that the redemption of that one life (Adam's) can provide for life-restoration to the entire race. Yet, because the whole race has inherited sin (the inability to keep a perfect law), and is, thereby, also dying, the whole race is meanwhile receiving the INSTRUCTION as to how serious disobedience is. And this *permission* of evil and dying (a time when sin is permitted and has its results, but when it is not individually imputed) is a visual teaching mechanism for all of the beings in the invisible spiritual world also.

### SIN'S PENALTY

It is good, at this point, to remind ourselves of what has been misinterpreted and corrupted by religions everywhere. The PENALTY for sin is DEATH. (Genesis 2:17 -- especially the KJV margin; Ezekiel 18:4) **The penalty IS NOT ETERNAL TORTURE!** The results of this erroneous understanding have been the root cause for nearly all religious lies, power, confusion, foolishness, hatred, and fear. It has made even nominal "Christianity" look miserable and irrational in the sight of thinking people everywhere. And it is all based on the first lie (Genesis 3:4) when the adversary wanted man to believe that he never dies! MOST OF US yet believe the lie!

### SIN UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Adam was under judgment for obedience and, therefore, for life itself. He failed. That failure was the "original sin." God turned his face from mankind as a result. But he left the administration of the sinning world under the supervision of "The Word" -- Jesus in his prehuman existence.

All the time from Eden until Jesus' First Advent, NO ONE WAS UNDER TRIAL FOR LIFE OR DEATH. This is why Paul could say that inherited death reigned over mankind due to the original sin-condemnation, BUT, "sin IS NOT IMPUTED when there is no law." (Romans 5:13). Paul admits that that "all have sinned" (Romans 5:12), but he also admits that the remainder of the race since Adam "have not sinned after the likeness of the offense of Adam." THAT means that the sins of all others do not carry the weight of responsibility that Adam's sin did. The race is dying due to Adam -- not due to its own sins. The "ransom" by Jesus makes him "the Lamb of God which taketh away the SIN (*singular*) of the world" -- Adam's sin.

In the same context, Paul explains that Israel's Law Covenant put THEM (Israel) under an added responsibility. In other words, their sins, (due to added enlightenment and a covenant relationship with God), DID impute to them something as the result of the willfulness in their sins. It imputed specific life-punishments which were added to the fact that they were already dying. But it DID NOT yet put them under judgment for life eternal. (Romans 5:12-14).

## Return to 2022 Index

The rest of mankind, however, have gone on sinning without building up personal imputation of condemnation for their sins.

When the First Advent came, God entered into a "Covenant by Sacrifice" with the disciples of Jesus. (Psalm 50:5) Due to the power of imputation of life rights growing out of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, The Christian Age saints (Jesus' disciples) ARE now willingly under judgment. ONLY they are under judgment. During this age, they will either be faithful to their covenant with God, or they will be extinguished forever. Their early and severe judgment will allow them to receive a "resurrection to life" in a spiritual body specially provided for them. (See John 5:28, 29 -- NOT KJV! -- Revelation 20:6, I Corinthians 15:49.)

But the rest of the billions of humanity are not under judgment, nor are they facing torments for their "sins!" They are not breaking the Divine Law because they ARE NOT UNDER the Divine Law! They WILL BE later.

Nevertheless, God has certain mercies which he extends to those NOT under a relationship with Him. For instance, He destroyed Sodom, NOT for its sins specifically, but to PROTECT them from continuing in a path which would so corrupt their characters that reform (when the Kingdom comes) would be unacceptably difficult.

Actually, Jesus pointed out that it will be "more tolerable" for Sodom in the Judgment Day (of the Kingdom) than it will be for Capernaum (a city of Israel -- Matthew 11:24). Capernaum's responsibilities were greater than Sodom's because (1) they were in covenant relationship with God, and (2) because THEY KNEW BETTER -- having been instructed under the Jewish Law and having had Messiah, himself, teach in their streets. But neither Sodom nor Capernaum has been consigned to eternal torment. They have BOTH been destroyed but promised an opportunity in Christ's Kingdom to return, reform, and gain eternal life in a perfected universe. Their sins have not destroyed their future blessings.

One point of importance is this: ALL OF US CAN attempt to keep ourselves from sliding farther and farther from the standards of the Divine Law. Cain's experience gives us an example. When Cain was about to slay his brother Abel, the Lord let him know that "sin lieth at the door, but you CAN master it!" NO ONE has the absolute ability now to prevent his humanity from sinning. But God's caution to Cain shows that all CAN keep themselves from giving in to much of what they might normally do. But a love of righteousness is required for ANY success in this endeavor.

God favors this effort toward righteousness -- especially if it is based on faith in the Creator. And, while we cannot truly be righteous in our imperfections, God "counts" our faith as righteousness. He did this with Abraham, and it made Abraham counted as a "friend of God." (James 2:23) He does it to a yet greater extent with the disciples of Jesus who can become not only "friends" of God, but "sons" of God -- despite the fact that sin is inherent in our fleshly bodies. But saints do not "practice sin." (I John 3:1-10; Romans 4:22-25)

## *Return to 2022 Index*

### THE ERADICATION OF SIN

The end of the story is this: Eventually God will have what He started out to have -- an entire universe of both terrestrial and spiritual intelligent beings who worship Him because they want to. They will have learned through instruction, experience, and observation what happens when they stray from the perfect standards (the Divine Law) which He has directed. They will love right, and they will hate wrong (sin) because they know and respect that the peaceful and fruitful fate of the universe hangs on those principles.

"Sin" will remain defined as the violation of that Law. But it will no longer be practiced. It will be a historical remembrance -- a reference point for the collective memory of how intolerable and hurtful it is.

Death (extinction) is a reasonable penalty for sin because sin has only one result -- it HURTS other beings. The reasonableness of the penalty will not only be understood by all, but it will be cherished by all because it will have brought about "the desire of all nations." (Haggai 2:7 -- KJV)

By the Lord's grace, we are now on the very threshold of that perfect time. Within our lifetimes, the Lord will intervene with the words, "Be still! And know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10) In Zephaniah 3:9, He adds, "Then I will give unto the people a pure language that all of them may call upon the Name of the Lord to serve Him WITH ONE CONSENT."

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