



THE PROBLEM OF SIN

Have you ever chosen to do something you knew was wrong to do? The Bible calls those wrong actions *sin*. In a general sense, sin means that when God gives us a law (or commandment), we refuse to do it, which makes us without law, or lawless. *"Whoever commits sin commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness"* (1 John 3:4). In other words, the Bible teaches that certain things are wrong, such as stealing. Thieves are counted among the unrighteous (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), who shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Paul says plainly: *"Let him who stole steal no longer. . ."* (Ephesians 4:29). Stealing is wrong; if we steal, we have broken God's law--we have sinned.

Rejecting Truth is also sin, since the Bible is Truth. One book of the New Testament that discusses the subject of sin is Romans. It is not as though man has never known truth; he has turned away from it and rejected it (Romans 1:18-20). The next few verses show how mankind has treated God and His Word.

"Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:21-25).

God wants all men to know the Truth: that is the reason He gave us the Bible. But if we reject it, He will let us become fools. He will allow us to be blinded by error (things that are not true) and even to be lost eternally (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). He will allow us to be deceived by false teachings. Many have already perished *"because they did not receive the love of the truth"* (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Do you love the Truth?

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"ALL HAVE SINNED"

When God chose Abraham and his descendants to be His own special people, there became two classes of people in the world: Abraham's children (who were later called Jews) and Gentiles (people from every other nation in the entire world). In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty of sin. The Gentiles rejected Truth and became worshipers of idols; the Jews were given God's holy law. But they did not keep it. Everyone (Jew or Gentile) has committed sin.

As it is written: *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Romans 3:10). *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Have you committed sin? Of course you have. The above Scriptures make it plain that each one of us chooses to sin. But you may wonder, "What kind of sins are there?" Actually, there are many kinds of sins. A few lists of them may be found in Romans 1:29-32, 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:26-32, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, and Revelation 21:8. Below are some categories of sins.

There are sins of the flesh. These refer to unlawful ways of satisfying fleshly desires. Included are sexual immorality (having a sexual relationship with someone not your wife or husband), adultery, homosexuality, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, drunkenness, revelling, etc. God wants His people to be holy and pure. *"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written: "Be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:15-16). Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).

There are sins of attitude, such as pride, envy, jealousy, covetousness, anger, hatred, malice, being unthankful or unforgiving, etc. Some of these are expressed by the tongue, which we are warned to control.

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1).

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Not only must we NOT do the things that are wrong; we must also do the things that are right and good. *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17).



"THE WAGES OF SIN IS . . ."

When we choose to sin, what happens? We lose our fellowship with God. Adam and Eve, in the very beginning of man's existence, lost that special relationship with God when they sinned (Genesis 3). The Old Testament prophet Isaiah told Israel how serious their sins were.

"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).

Since God is holy, He can not approve of nor fellowship sin. In fact, He must punish sin. *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). What will happen to us if we are guilty of sin when we die? We will be lost. There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus shall be: *". . .revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. . ."* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Every one of us has sinned. All of us have lost our fellowship with God. We all deserve death, spiritual death--eternal separation from God and all His good blessings. We have earned this punishment because of our sins. We certainly do not want to suffer forever, but we deserve it.

But God, the very Holy One we have offended, does not want us to be cast out of His presence forever. Since He is holy and just, however, He must punish sin. He decided that there was a way to save us from our sins. He let Jesus take our place and bear our punishment.

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"But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. . . .He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many. . ."(Isaiah 53:5, 12). ["Transgressions" and "iniquities" are synonyms for "sins."]

Yes, *"the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). Since Jesus is part of the Godhead, we can understand what Paul meant in Romans 3:26 when he said that God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 above once more. Do you know God? Have you obeyed the gospel? If not, you are still lost in your sins. The next lesson will tell you how you can be saved through Jesus.



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE PROPER ANSWER

1. Refusing to do a commandment of God is _____.
2. Men exchanged the truth of God for the _____.
3. In order to be saved one must receive the love of the _____.
4. The two classes of people in the world are _____ and _____.
5. Adultery, homosexuality, and drunkenness are sins of the _____.
6. Pride, jealousy, and hatred are sins of _____.
7. To him who knows to do _____ and does not do it, to him it is sin.
8. The wages of sin is _____; the gift of God is _____.
9. When Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, He will take vengeance on those who do not _____ God and on those who do not obey the _____.
10. God let _____ bear the punishment for our sins.
11. God is _____ to require a penalty for sin, but He is also our _____ in providing a way for us to be saved from our sins.

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MARK THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE

1. Stealing is a sin. _____
2. The rejection of Truth is sin. _____
3. God allows people to be blinded by error and lost eternally. _____
4. Many, but not all, men are guilty of sin. _____
5. Committing sin does not affect our fellowship with God. _____
6. God cannot approve of or fellowship sin. _____
7. Everyone deserves to suffer forever. _____
8. God wants everyone to suffer forever. _____
9. God does not have to punish sin. _____

Please use the space below for any questions or comments you may have concerning this study.

Please Note:

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May God bless you as you strive to understand our God and His word.

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