

What the Bible Teaches About Sin

by

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THE NATURE OF SIN

What does the Bible teach concerning sin? The answer to that question is of eternal consequence. What one believes about sin will affect his total outlook on religion. His understanding of God, sacrifice, forgiveness, moral conduct, judgment, and every other great Christian doctrine will be influenced by one's understanding about sin. It is imperative that men know the mind of God on the subject of sin.

God has not left us in ignorance concerning sin. He has spoken emphatically and repeatedly on the subject. Bible doctrine underscores the reality of sin, warns of the consequences of sin, reveals the seriousness of sin, foretells of the judgment on sin, sets forth the remedy for sin, and offers the forgiveness of sin. Thank God for what He has revealed concerning the dread spiritual malady that is called sin.

What is sin? Someone might answer, "Sin is sexual immorality." Another might say, "Sin is doing wrong to another person." Yet another might volunteer, "Sin is violating religious principles." Each of those things is a sin, but there is much more involved. The Bible speaks of the nature of sin by revealing that sin is an act, a state, and a disposition. A careful examination of each of those aspects of sin will answer the question, "What is sin?"

Sin is an Act

The basic expression of sin is acts of violation or of non-obedience. There are scores of words in the Bible which emphasize the evil of wrong doing by calling it sin.

Sin is "transgression." The Bible says, "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:*

for sin is the transgression of the law," I John 3:4. Transgression means to overstep the boundary set by the law. It is a breaking of the law. But there is more involved than mere wrong action. The spirit is involved in sinful acts. Transgression carries in its heart a spirit of open and daring defection. It acts wrong when it knows such an action is contrary to God's will. Adam and Eve committed transgression when they ate of the fruit of the tree of which God had specifically commanded them that they must not eat. All sin carries that spirit of transgression in its heart. **Sin is error.** It is departure from the right way. It is turning aside. It is missing the mark. God has set forth the standard of righteousness. Man misses it when he sins and sins when he misses it. Again, the spirit is related to the act. A spirit of moral obliquity and willfulness, indicated by a lack of desire to meet God's standard and unconcern when one has fallen, accompanies the act, which comes short. The Bible pictures man's plight when it reads, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*" Rom. 3:23.

Sin is trespass. It is the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority. The acts of sin testify to God, "I know what you want me to do but I want to do something different. I will do what I wish and ignore you." The terrible nature of sin is evident upon consideration of the spirit, which prompts the actions. Sin is so serious that the Bible speaks of our being "*dead in trespasses and sins*" Eph. 2:1.

Sin is lawlessness. It is spiritual anarchy. It is the denial of God's right to govern the life of a man. God's law is just, and holy, and good (Rom.7:12). Obedience to its precepts is the best possible way of a man. But sin expresses itself in acts of rebellion against the good law of God. It insists upon following its own course, as the criminal demands his right to violate the law of the land. He who commits sin always transgresses God's law.

Sin is a state

Sin is the condition of absence of righteousness. Such a condition expresses itself in evil deeds. The action is the result of the condition. A tree bears apples because it is an apple tree; that is the only fruit it can bear. A man does wrong because he is in sin; he cannot do otherwise. Each thing in nature acts according to its inner nature. The nature within produces the fruit.

Sin is a condition of darkness. Throughout the Bible, light is a symbol of the presence of God and righteousness; sin is a symbol of the presence of Satan and sin. When Jesus came into the world, it was recorded, "*The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,*" John 1:4. Christians are admonished to "*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,*" Eph. 5:11. The great work of Satan is to keep people in sin. Therefore, he blinds the minds of them who do not believe to keep the glorious light of the gospel of Christ from shining into them (11 Cor. 4:2-6). To be saved is to be delivered from the kingdom of the darkness of sin and translated into the kingdom of the light of righteousness in Jesus Christ.

Sin is a condition of separation. That is why sin brings death. The basic idea of death is separation. Physical death means the separation of the human spirit from the physical body. Spiritual death means the separation of the human spirit from God. Isaiah 59:2 reads, "*You iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you*". That is why Rom. 5:12 declares, "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all man because all have sinned.*" Rom. 6:23 adds, "*The wages of sin is death....*"

Sin is a condition of corruption. The Hebrew language of the Old Testament uses a word (shachath) to describe sin which means "a condition of rot" (Gen. 6:12). Another term is used (mum) which means "covered with blots and blemishes" (Psa. 14:1; Isa. 1:6).

There is an amazing thing about sin. It is not amazing that man sinned. It is amazing that God loves the sinner and rescues him from his sin.

Sin is a Disposition

It is an attitude of enmity toward God. Romans 5:12 distinctly state that man in sin is the "*enemy*" of God. The Greek term used (echthos) means "hateful, odious, hostile, opposing and hating another." What a terrible accusation. Yet, the Bible declares that is the condition of sinners, not merely the worst of sinners, but every sin

What hope is there for a sinner? Or, is there any hope at all? There is hope. It is announced in the Christian gospel. Romans 5:6, 8, 10, repeats it three times: "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*". The hope of the sinner is Jesus Christ.

Jesus will reconcile you to God, removing the disposition of enmity. He will impute divine righteousness to you, relieving the tragedy of an absence of righteousness. He will produce good works through you, releasing you from bondage to evil ways. Jesus will take care of every element of sin in you.

Man's problem of sin in act, state and disposition requires a radical change. That change is produced through the Holy Spirit who causes a repenting sinner to be born again and become a member of the family of God. Enter into Christ today. Become a new creature through repentance toward God and faith In Jesus Christ.

Let us pray. "Father, thank you that you have not abandoned us in our sin. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for giving Jesus to die for us that we might be born again. Let every person who receives these words hear with spiritual comprehension and be saved. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

A terrible malady has settled upon mankind. It has affected every person. Its consequences are fatally serious. I speak of the presence of sin in human experience. Whence came sin? How did it first begin? How did it enter human experience? Why is it so universally prevalent today?

What effect does it have upon the normal person today?

Those questions deserve an answer. Some have denied the fact of sin. Others have admitted that sin is real, but deny that it is serious. Yet others affirm that sin is real and carries serious and eternal consequences. Thank God, He has given a true answer in the Bible. An investigation of what the Bible says about sin will be of great profit.

In the current series of messages, we are investigating what the Bible teaches about sin. The previous study dealt with the nature of sin, concluding that sin is an act, a state and a disposition. Let us investigate the Bible now to find the facts concerning the origin of sin.

Sin originated in the mind of Satan

It did not begin among men, but among the angels of God. There was a great angel named Lucifer. He was so magnificent in glory that he was called "the son of the morning" (Isa. 14:12) as if he were himself the daystar. He was described in these words: "*Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the*

beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee," Ezek. 28:12-15.

What was the evil, the iniquity, found in the great angel called Lucifer? God replied through the prophet Ezekiel *"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness..."* Ezek. 28:17. That was the problem. The sin of pride entered into the heart of the great and glorious angel. The prophet Isaiah reported the thoughts that passed through the mind of Lucifer *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the most High,"* Isa 14:13-14 Lucifer was filled with pride and the desire for advancement in position. He desired to occupy the place of God. Sinful blasphemy arose in his head when he rejected the sovereignty of God and aspired to take God's place in the eyes of the universe.

What did God do about such a grievous sin? He pronounced judgment. He said to Lucifer, *"Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit,"* Isa. 14:15 *"Thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will slay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee,"* Ezek. 28:16-18. Satan knows that judgment is pronounced and will certainly be executed.

Sin Entered Human Experience

Sin originated with Lucifer in the angelic sphere, but it did not stop there. Knowing that his scheme was found out, and hearing the judgment of God upon his sinful rebellion, Lucifer became "Satan" and "the devil." He became the opponent to all that is good. He became the enemy of God and all who would do the will of God, He resolved to build his kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God. It was in relation to that design of Satan that sin came into human experience.

Genesis, chapter three, recounts that blessed condition of the original man and woman. God had created them both with His own hands. He brought them together to share the joys of original human love. He placed them in the beautiful Garden of Eden where they had food, water, companionship, and productive labor all that was needed to keep them happy. In that ideal environment, Satan came with his enticement to sin.

Genesis, chapter three, recounts the entrance of sin into human experience. Satan began by pointing out to Eve the one limitation God had placed upon all her freedom in the Garden of Eden. *"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"* he asked. She replied, *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, except for the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, for God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."* Then Satan denied the clear Word of God, making as if God were a liar and was trying to keep something good from the man and the woman He had created: *"Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as*

gods, knowing good and evil." The woman then fell to the three fold aspect of temptation. (1) The lust of the flesh caused her to see the tree was good for food. (2) The lust of the eyes caused her to realize it was pleasant to the eyes. (3) The pride of life caused her to desire it that she might be wise. So she followed the way laid by Satan and violated God's express command by eating the forbidden fruit. She gave to her husband also, and he ate with her. In that act of rebellion against God, sin entered into human experience.

The Bible gives the solemn statement: "*The wages of sin is death,*" Rom. 6:23. Adam and Eve died spiritually the day they ate the forbidden fruit. They were suddenly ashamed to stand before one another; separation came between them because of sin. They tried to remedy that by sewing fig-leaf aprons to wear. They also were ashamed to appear before God. They tried to remedy that by hiding from Him among the trees of the garden. Yes, they both died that day. The essence of death is separation: they were separated from one another and from God. No longer was there unhindered harmony of spirit between them. Sin wrecked its tragic effects on mankind.

The tragedy of sin did not stop with Satan nor with the first human parents. Mankind became depraved as a consequence of that original human sin. Adam and Eve passed on to their posterity a nature weakened toward sin. Romans 5:12 expresses it this way, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

Every human child is born with a disposition weakened toward sin. The inevitable consequence is that, when he reaches the age of spiritual responsibility, he will sin just as his parents did. An infant is not born under the guilt of sin which will send him to hell, but under the consequences of sin which will cause him to be weak and fall into sin by his own decision. The sole remedy for sin, and the sufficient remedy for sin, is in Jesus Christ whose blood washes away all sin. Pray with me, please. "Father, we thank you for the promise that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Grant that many people may this moment turn their sin problem to you and receive forgiveness and cleansing by your grace. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

There is one way in which you and I are exactly alike. We may differ in age, education, wealth, interests, profession, etc., but there is one way in which we are alike. We are sinners. The Bible says, "*...There is none that doeth good, no, not one For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God....Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,*" Rom. 3:12, 23, 19. That describes you and me. We are classified the same before God. We are among those who have sinned and come short of the glory of God. What is the explanation for our predicament?

We believe on the Inherent, universal and total depravity of man. We believe the Bible speaks truth when it says we are all by nature the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Consider what that means. "Depravity" means a person is wrong, corrupt in sin, because of an inward disposition toward sin. He is weakened in resistance to sin to the extent that he actually practices sin. We believe that depravity is inherent. That is, it comes as a consequence of one's birth (Psa. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Eph. 2:3). Just as one's color of skin is determined by his parents, so one's spiritual condition is received from them also. We believe that depravity is universal. Every person is affected; there is not one single exception in the whole human race (Rom. 3:9ff; 5:12).

That is why each person who reaches the age of spiritual responsibility must be saved to be at peace with God and go to heaven. We believe that depravity is total. The whole of man's self is affected spirit, soul and body. Man is unable to deliver himself. Without divine help he becomes worse and worse. Man is a sinner desperately in need of a Savior.

Depravity - inherent, universal, and total depravity - does not mean one is born a guilty sinner, but that he is born with a disposition weakened so he will be unable to resist sin. It does not mean one is as bad as he can be, but that he is as bad off as he can be. Depravity means it is not only possible a person may sin as a result of his power to choose, but also that he will sin as a result of his weakness and tendency toward sin.

We believe men are helplessly under sin.

Read Romans, chapter three. They are guilty of transgression, which means rebellion, trespass, and disregard of the righteousness of God's laws. They are guilty of evil, which means they oppose the holiness of God. They are guilty of ungodliness, which means lack of reverent awe toward God. They are guilty of unbelief, which means a failure to believe God and trust His Word. They are guilty of lawlessness, which is contempt for the divine law. They are guilty of disobedience, which means they are unwilling to be led by truth. Why are men that way? They possess a sin nature. Their actions are but the indication of their inner spirit. Men do sinful things because they have a sinful nature. Man was created to enjoy freedom in the fellowship of God. Instead, he is enslaved in the bondage of sin.

The tragedy is compounded by the fact that man is helpless in his sin. Then Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,"* John 8:34. The Apostle Paul repeated that truth, writing, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* Rom. 6:16. The helplessness of the sinner to free himself from his sin is indicated by the prophet Jeremiah, *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,"* Jer. 13:23. The tragedy of the sinner is that he is helpless in his sin.

We believe that men are spiritually dead.

Remember that death means separation. The Bible teaches that sin results in the separation of a person from God. God warned the first humans against sin, saying, *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"* Gen. 2:17. He warned through His prophet, *"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die,"* Ezek. 18:4. The New Testament continues the theme set forth in the Old Testament. Romans 6:23 reads in part, *"The wages of sin is death."* Romans 5: 12 teaches that as sin came into human experience through Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, death came with it. The result was that death has passed upon the whole human race, for all have sinned. To be saved, according to Eph. 2: 1, is to be resurrected out of spiritual death into spiritual life. Sin has brought death in every generation of mankind.

Men are under the domination of Satan.

The devil is called *"the god of this world"* in II Cor. 4:4. He even offered to deliver the kingdoms of the world to the Lord Jesus saying, *"All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it,"* Luke 4:6. Jesus did not deny Satan's authority in the present world system, nor his power to deliver it to whomever he would. The Apostle John stated that the whole world lies in the control of the wicked one (I John 5:19). The term *"world"* does not mean just rock and trees, hills and valleys. It refers to the world of

mankind. Men are under the domination of the devil. Colossians 1: 13 reveal that to be saved means to be "*delivered from the power of darkness*" and to be "*translated into the kingdom*" of God's dear Son. Salvation is deliverance, deliverance from power, and deliverance from the power of darkness. Yes, men who are in sin are dominated by the devil and held in slavery by him.

We believe men are under condemnation.

God's judgment is always against sin. His righteous verdict always condemns sin. Jesus said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3:18.

Many people have the idea that all will be well with them until the time of eternal judgment. Before that time, they expect to have opportunity to get the sin problem settled. That is not the case at all. The Bible says the sinner (the person who has not received forgiveness through faith in Jesus) is condemned already. The sentence has not been executed, but the guilt has already been determined. That is why each person should be saved today.

Jesus Christ is the remedy for the depravity in man. Man is under sin, but "*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*" Rom. 8:2. Man is spiritually dead, "*but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where with he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened (resurrected) us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved:)*" Eph. 2:4-5. Man is condemned, but "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,*" Rom. 8: 1. Man is dominated by the power of the devil, but God has "*delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,*" Col. 1: 13. Man is lost, "*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,*" Eph. 2:13.

Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is the only Savior. Jesus is the sufficient Savior. Jesus will be your Savior if you trust Him. "Come to Jesus; He will save you though your sins as crimson glow. If you give your heart to Jesus, He will make it white as snow." Come to Jesus, right now. Let us pray about it. "Father, thank you that you receive sinners and make them saints. Thank you for each person who is now calling on you for forgiveness. Thank you that you are hearing and making them new in Christ Jesus. Thank you for being our loving Father. In Jesus' name Amen."

THE REMEDY FOR SIN

A lad and his father were working together in the field. The boy went before dropping beans in the row while the father followed covering them with soil as he plowed. The boy had been told he could quit when he ran out of bean seed. He had much rather play than work, of course, so he secretly scattered the beans everywhere when his father was not looking. Days passed and the seed sprouted and plants showed up where the beans had been tossed. The father took his son to the field to show the evidence of his wrongdoing. There in the field the father and son knelt together. Dad prayed, "Lord, teach my boy that beans come up where beans have been planted." That principle is applied in the spiritual realm in Num. 32:23. The Bible warns, ".... *behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.*"

Previous studies in this series have underscored three great Bible truths. (1) As to its nature, sin

is an act and an attitude and a condition. Every person is affected by personal sin. (2) As to its origin, sin originated in the angelic realm and came into human experience by the deceit of an angelic being called Satan. Every person suffers the consequences of human sin. (3) As to its consequences, spiritual death (which means separation from God) has come upon all mankind through the depravity wrought by the sin of the first humans. Every person needs to be saved. Those three great truths raise the question, "What is the remedy for sin?"

The remedy for sin is Jesus Christ.

He is God's provision that the sinner might be forgiven and restored to full fellowship with God. He who comes to God is *"Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood"* Rom. 3:24-25.

"Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. 5: 18-21.

Jesus is the only remedy for sin. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,"* Acts 4:12. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"* John 14:6.

Jesus is the sure remedy for sin. He said, *"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day,"* John 6: 39-40. Those who know Jesus best have testified, *"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is reached unto you the forgiveness of sin; and by him justified from all things."* Acts 13:38-39.

How is it possible that Jesus can be the remedy for sin for all men of all generations and conditions? The Bible replies in these words, *".... We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,"* Hebrews 2:9, 14, 15. What did Jesus do during His incarnate ministry on earth, which made Him the sole and sufficient remedy for sin?

He Bore Our Curse

The curse of sin is death. God warned Adam and Eve that the day they sinned (by eating fruit from the forbidden tree) they would surely die (Gen. 2:17). They ate in disobedience of God and entered under the curse of death as a consequence. Jesus came and endured the death, which each sinner should suffer, the terrible experience of separation from God, and thereby removed the curse from those who receive Him.

The Bible makes repeated reference to Jesus dying "for" sinners. For instance, I Pet. 3: 18 reads, *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"* Romans 5:8 reads, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* To say Christ died "for" sinners means He died in their place; He died on their behalf. The sin debt was paid when the law was satisfied by the innocent One suffering death in behalf of the guilty ones. The curse of sin is no more on the Christian because

Christ bore that curse. Galatians 3:13 expressed the truth in these words, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*"

He Provides Our Cleansing

A great old hymn testifies, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." The hymn expresses a great truth recorded in I John 1:7, ". . . *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" John continues, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,*" I John 1:9.

As a garment is washed in water to cleanse it from defilement, so the repenting believer is washed spiritually in the blood of Jesus Christ and becomes clean and pure before God. God says to every sinner who receives Jesus as Lord and Savior, "*...ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*" I Cor. 6:11.

Jesus Makes Us Anew

God does not merely reform the sinner, He regenerates and recreates him a new person in Christ. Six hundred years before Christ, the prophet Jeremiah saw a demonstration of God's renewing in the heart of man. He saw a potter remake a vessel which was marred. He heard God say, "*...cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand,*" Jer. 18:6. The New Testament declares, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,*" 11 Cor. 5:17.

He Makes Us Righteous

The problem with the sinner is his sin. If there were a way he could be free from his sin and have righteousness in its place, all would be well with God. That is exactly what Jesus has done. He who knew no sin became sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). The one who trusts Jesus Christ will find, like Abraham, his faith is imputed unto him for righteousness (James 2:23).

Jesus has taken your sin and bore it on the cross as if it were His Own. He has suffered the curse your sin brought. Now, in response to your faith in Him as your own Lord and Savior, He gives you His righteousness as if it were your own. You enjoy the blessings His righteousness brings. Come to Jesus with your sins and exchange them for His righteousness. Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. Open the door of your life and invite Him to come in, right now.

"Father, grant that of the millions who receives these words, multitudes may turn to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith and receive remission of all sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen.'

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

When man's most desperate need meets God's most gracious provision, an act of grace is performed. That act is called the "forgiveness of sin."

God's inspired Word suggests three facts about man's condition and God's provision. (1) Sin is the real cause of all human problems. (2) Removal of sin is a gracious act of God which man could never perform. (3) Forgiveness is the blessed condition of the person who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. Upon those three principles rests the Bible doctrine of forgiveness of sin.

I remember talking with a person newly converted to faith in Christ. He did not understand what is involved in divine forgiveness, so he kept asking questions. "Does God really forgive me for

all I have done? Will His forgiveness last? What does forgiveness really mean? " I will share with you what I told him about forgiveness of sin as taught in the Holy Bible.

Forgiveness Means Every Kind of Sin is Remitted

Listen to Psa. 32:1, 2, 5, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest me the iniquity of my sin. "*

Those words were written after King David's grievous sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband lest the sin be known. God's prophet, Nathan by name, rebuked David for the sin. The king poured out his prayer before God, confessing the sin and asking forgiveness (Psa. 51). God did forgive and Psa. 32 is his expression of praise for forgiveness of the most serious sins.

David saw his sin as "transgression" rebellion, revolt, trespass, and an open and daring defection from God's covenant. He saw his sin as "sin error", coming short of God's ordained standard of conduct. He saw his sin as "iniquity" vanity, crookedness, a warped disposition toward wrong. He saw his sin as "guile" craftiness, deceit, and hypocrisy. David recognized the heinous nature of his sin.

Consider the text carefully. The transgression was "forgiven." The sin was "covered." The iniquity was no longer "imputed." There was complete and eternal remission of every sin in David's life just as there will be in your life when you receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

Forgiveness Means There is Complete Remission of Every Sin

God does nothing half-way. What He does is done for eternity. When He forgives, He forgives completely. The term "forgive" means to lift up and bear away." That is what God did with David's sin. That is what He does with the sin of each person who comes to Him in penitent faith. John the Baptist introduced Jesus as "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*" John 1:29. God remits sin by taking it away.

God also remits sin by covering it, blotting it out. The Hebrew word, which we call "atonement", actually means, "to cover." The Day of Atonement, spoken of in Leviticus 16, was the day when sin was covered by the blood of the sacrificed animal. God is still in the business of blotting out sin by the blood of the sacrificed one. In Jesus, we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin (Eph. 1:7). Thus blotted out, sin is no longer on our record.

God remits sin by forgetting it. He promised, "*I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,*" Jer. 31:34. God remits sin by removing it. Psalm 103:12 reads, "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath here moved our transgressions from us.*" The poet has well written, "East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." Where does God put our sins when He removes them? Isaiah 36:17 say they are put behind His back out of His sight. Micah 7:18, 19 report they are buried in the depths of the sea.

Take heart in the promises of God's Holy Word. Bring your sins to Jesus. He will bear them away, cover them, cancel them as a debt, forget them, hide them from His view, blot them out, wash them away and cleanse their stain, remove them from you as far as the east is from the west, and bury them in the sea. God promises complete remission of every sin when you receive His Son, Jesus the Christ, as your personal Savior.

Forgiveness means the Guilt of Remitted Sins will never Face You again

Man's forgiveness is partial and incomplete. A man may seem to forgive his brother an offense, but later take it up again and hold the offender responsible for it. Not so with God. When he

forgives, it is for eternity.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children," Psa. 103:8, 10-12, 17.

God declared, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"* Rom. 8: 1. The present condition of the believer is that there is no condemnation of any sort, for any cause, by any power. He is safe from condemnation at the present because he is in Christ.

What about the future? Jesus replied, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life,"* John 5:24. No condemnation now & No condemnation in the future. Forgiveness means the guilt of remitted sins will never face you again.

Forgiveness means Jesus has paid the Full and Sufficient Penalty for our Sins

The teaching of Hebrews 10 is most emphatic at this point. Consider three statements, recorded in verses 10, 12, 14. *"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."* The Bible could be no clearer. The sacrifice of Jesus, offered once in time for all men who ever lived, affects eternal redemption. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from "all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,"* Isa. 53:5. God saw the *"travail of his soul"* and was satisfied (Isa. 53: 11). Eternal remission of sins is available today.

"However the battle is ended, though proudly the victory comes, With fluttering flags and prancing nags and the echoing roll of drums; Still history proclaims the motto, in letters of shining light, No matter is ever settled, until it is settled right. Though the heel of the strong oppressor grind the weak to the dust And the voice of the fame with loud acclaim may call him great and just; Let these who applaud take warning, and keep this motto in sight: No matter is ever settled, until it is settled right." Proverbs 14:9 reports that fools make a mock of sin. The wise man is careful to settle the sin problem right. Who is willing to say today, 'Lord, I want to settle it now'?"

"Father, minister through these words of truth from Holy Scripture that the hearts of all who share these words may be turned to Jesus Christ in whom alone there is forgiveness of sin. We ask in His name. Amen."