

What Is Sin?

Is it only an overt act? Could it be an omission of one's duty? What about my own personal thoughts, could that be considered sin in God's sight? These are all interesting thoughts, BUT when it comes to SALVATION the only safe source is God's Word!

In God's Word it states that Sin is "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. " (1 John 3:4). Now couple this with Matthew 15:19-20-"For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: 20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." Therefore, the Scriptures clearly states that it not only includes the overt act, but also the thoughts of an impure heart will defile a man Does not Jesus clearly teach us that the very act of sin is conceived in the heart of the sinner? Does He not teach, that the lustful desire is the sin that leads to the overt act! Let us look together at Matthew 5:28--"but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. " Now , look at Matthew 5:22--"but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." Brother Gailen, made a very good point when he brought before our minds the statement of God to Adam--"Who told you"(Gen.3:11--"And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"). We have set before us the very statements of the SON of GOD, they are not debatable. This thought of keeping man's heart pure before God is not a new thought. Look at what the Wisdom writer wrote in Proverbs 4:23--"Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life." and 23:7--"For as he thinketh within himself, so is he:...". It should be evident to every Christian that it is absolutely essential to keep our hearts pure.

The first scripture that we quoted (1 John 3:4) states that sin is "lawlessness" that is "without law". W.E. Vines states --"This definition of sin sets forth its essential character as the rejection of the law, or will, of God and the substitution of the will of self.". In 2 John 9--"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same

hath both the Father and the Son." Therefore, if we are without the law of Christ or if we go beyond the teaching of Christ we have rejected Christ and God. We are also told that Christ is our example--"For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps:" (1 Peter 2:21). But less we forget we have another example too--Jude 7--"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." God's Word is very plain from beginning to end, God has given man a choice, either to please God or to please man. God has set forth just as plain the reward of each.

Sin is defined as "unrighteousness" 1 John 5:17--"All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." Lexicon's define "unrighteousness as--"a deed violating law and justice, injustice, wrong,, iniquity, . Thus a violation of a standard . In this case the violation of God's standard.

What about the omission of one's duty to Christ? Let us look at what James has recorded for us, (4:17)--"To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. " Very simply put, to fail to do what we know is right is to sin. Also, in the Roman Epistle we have another sin revealed, the sin of doubt. In Romans 14:23 Paul states--"But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." This is simply telling us that an act that violates our conscience is sin. That is, if one's actions do not have the full consent of his conscience, he violates his conscience and commits sin. It must be understood that the conscience is not our guide, it only means that we can not do anything that is not in perfect harmony with our conscience (What we believe is right). Now, remember,--"So belief [cometh] of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Therefore, we can safely state that the "Word of Christ" is our guide in religion, and one must educate his conscience by learning what the Word of Christ teaches.

Let us look at the first sin of man: Genesis 2:15-17--"And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 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." Adam and Eve committed sin by disobeying this simple command of God and thus were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-24).

Now, it is safe to say that sin against God would fall into one of these four categories:

1. One substituting something else for God's commands.
2. One adding to God's commands (going beyond what God authorizes).
3. One subtracting from what God demands.
4. One omitting what God has required (rebellion against God).

What does God require of His servants? Luke 8: 15-- "And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience. "

Beloved, we must recognize sin for what it really is, the robber of our eternal home with our Holy Father and His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.