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God's Answer to Sin

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God's Answer to Sin

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God’s Answer To Sin

The Bible speaks specifically and definitely about sin. Generalities and vague references are eliminated when the inspired Old and New Testament writers talk about evil. One writer remarks, “It might even be said that in the Bible man has only two theological concerns involving himself: his sin and his salvation.” (p. 361, “Sin,” S. J. DeVries, Interpreter’s Dictionary, IV.) Notice the directness of the words we now read from Proverbs, chapter 6: “There are six things which Jehovah hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that deviseth wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”¹ (Proverbs 6:16-19).

The New Testament is just as emphatic when dealing with sin and its reality in our lives. There were Christians at Corinth who before leaving sin were “fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.” Paul states, “And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

In the New Testament book of Ephesians we are instructed, “that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Ephesians 5:5). The last chapter of Revelation pictures those who will not enjoy eternity in Heaven. “Without (the gates of the eternal city) are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

Sin cannot be dismissed and its reality eliminated by our refusal to think about it. Although we attempt to ignore the crippling effects of our bondage to sin, it nevertheless remains destructively real for every man. Our Lord taught, “Verily, verily, I say unto you. Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin” (John 8:34).

The message I bring you today from God’s word is one of deliverance from sin, real guiltlessness, and the true freedom which every man can know through God’s redemptive work in Christ, “in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

We first ask, “What is sin?” Throughout the Old Testament three terms are employed regarding evil in our lives. In Exodus 34 we learn of God, “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty . . .” Exodus 34:6, 7). “Iniquities” as an Old Testament word suggests “unashamed misdeeds” or “perversion.” “Transgressions” in this and other texts indicates “acts of rebellion” against God and “voluntary sin” which man consciously commits. “Sins” points to “unwitting offences” with the connotation of “missing one’s aim.” “The Old Testament as a whole teaches that sin denotes abnormal behavior, from the point of view of both law and theology” (p. 19, Quell, Gottfried, Georg Bertram, Gustav Stahlin, and Walter Grundman, “Sin,” Bible Key Words, III Trs. J. R. Coates). Isaiah mentions all three terms just noticed and suggests of the sinner’s true actions, “transgressing and denying Jehovah, and turn-

¹ All Biblical quotations are taken from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.
ing away from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood” (Isaiah 59:12, 13).

The Old Testament further reveals that sin is a universal condition (I Kings 8:46; Isaiah 53:6), an affliction or total calamity (Isaiah 53:4), the very essence of foolishness (Proverbs 24:9), and that condition of heart and life for which each of us is individually and personally responsible (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Sin creates an impassable gulf between man and God. Sin is spiritual death or separation from God. The prophet Isaiah rightly observes “your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul reveals that all men must bear the burden of their sins, “because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly for God manifested it unto them . For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly known of God is manifest in them; for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly

To answer the question, “What is sin?” is to recognize its terrible nature, its corrupting influence, and destructive quality. Yet, the Bible stresses repeatedly the consequences of a life of sin. In many revealing passages which accurately reflect our personal experiences with sin we are shown the conditions and attitudes that result from such a manner of life. The book of Job, chapter four, verse 8, says, “According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow trouble, reap the same.”

Or again in Proverbs, at chapter twenty-two, we hear, “He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity; and the rod of his wrath shall fall” (Proverbs 22:8). In the New Testament it is Paul again who reminds us of this universal rule, when he writes, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:7, 8). This principle is too fully evidenced in our lives to need further defense. It is a fundamental axiom of life — we reap what we sow!

Isaiah describes the inevitable fruits of evil in chapter fifty-nine of his prophecy. “Justice is far from us,” he remarks, “and we walk in obscurity.” The sinner gropes “as they that have no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the twilight.” Isaiah further says that the evil doer’s “transgressions are multiplied” and that his “sins testify against” him. The prophet speaks for all of us when he concludes, “for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them” (Isaiah 59:9-13).

Sin results in confusion, misdirection, unrest, and anxiety. The Bible properly observes, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

Sin produces a spiritual instability that will withstand neither the ravages of life nor the tests of the judgment. The wicked, says the Psalmist, “are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (Psalm 1:4, 5). The final judgment prophetically described by Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel reveals those stunned by the sentence of Christ, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). Their eternal punishment was the direct result of their own self-directed and self-centered lives. (Matthew 25:41-46).

But the final and eternal consequence of our sins is nowhere pictured as it is in Revelation, chapter twenty. Listen carefully and ponder your own condition: “And I saw a great white throne (John declares), and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15). Eternal damnation, complete separation from God and all that is pure and holy, eternal hell, the second death — this is the ultimate conclusion of sin in our lives.

But God provides an answer to sin! That is the message of this hour. We have spent much of our time showing sin’s destructive nature. But all this simply makes God’s concern and His answer of love all the more vital. Isaiah saw God’s answer in a person, and prophesied, “But 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” (Isaiah 53:5). The angel of God, announcing the virgin birth of our Savior to Joseph, said, “And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus demonstrated His power over sin through His great miracles and indicated on one occasion that this was the reason for them (Luke 5:22, 23). But in His death on the cross, Jesus the Christ abolished, once for all, sin’s power. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews states, “but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:28). John the Baptist
described Jesus as “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The shed blood of Christ is the divinely appointed power that frees us from our sins. When ordaining the communion service or Lord’s Supper, Jesus said of the cup, “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

John tells us that Christ “loosed us from our sins by his blood” (Revelation 1:5). Christ, our high priest, unlike the Jewish high priests, offered one final and continually effective sacrifice for sins! “For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7:26, 27).

The Apostle Paul uses a very significant phrase to describe the state of one freed from sin by the blood of Christ: We read it in Romans 8 where the Apostle writes, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). To be “in Christ” is to have salvation, II Timothy 2:10 teaches; and Paul says in another passage that “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Today you can die to sin, be completely separated from every stain and guilt that spoils your life. The death of Christ that gives us this freedom from the miseries of sin can be made a part of your own life. Read the sixth chapter of Romans, in the New Testament, today! Belief in Christ as God’s son and acceptance of Him as your Lord (Romans 10:9, 10), coupled with your determined change of heart and life, prepares you for New Testament baptism, which according to Romans 6:1-6 unites you with Christ, with His death for your sins, with the blood shed in His death, and with His resurrection to new life. All this brings you to the state of forgiven sin and “newness of life.”