

ARE CHRISTIANS ALSO SINNERS?

The common and almost universal answer to this question in the church of the twenty-first century is "We are all sinners; we sin every day; we will be sinners as long as we live in this body of flesh." Such "believing" has not always been the case, however. In fact, in order to believe "we are all sinners," we must deny the clear message of the gospel of Christ as given by the apostles in the scriptures (KJV). Consider the words of the Apostle John:

*"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.** Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **He that committeth sin is of the devil;** for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **In this the children of God are manifest,** and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." I John 3:5-10*

It is almost universally believed that John said we who are born of God "do not practice sin." This is easily proven not to be the case. The Greek word which was translated as "commit" is "poieo." The Strong's Concordance with its Greek Lexicon has designated the Greek word "poieo" as "G4160," and gives this very simple definition; "Apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary; **to make or do** (in a very wide application, more or less direct):" Strong's Greek Lexicon also instructs us to "**Compare G4238.**"

"G4238" is the designation given by Strong's Concordance for the Greek word "prasso," which is defined by Strong's as follows: G4238 prassō A primary verb; to practice, that is, perform repeatedly or habitually (**thus differing from G4160, which properly refers to a single act**);

Notice in the comparison between "poieo (commit)" and "prasso (practice)," Strong's says the Greek word poieo "properly refers to a single act." This is the word the apostle John used throughout his epistles concerning whether those who are born of God are also sinners. John did not use the Greek word "prasso" even once in his epistles. When he said "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,*" John purposely chose the Greek word which indicated that those who are "born of God" do not commit a single act of sin, unless they have been moved away from Christ and fallen from grace. For understanding of this statement consider the sin of adultery. Those who are born of God not only do not practice adultery, but they do not commit adultery at all!

John said those who are born of God "*do not commit sin*" because "*they cannot sin.*" I John 3:9. This may seem impossible to many, but what if I said "A mother cannot take her child's life."? Is that too strong? We understand that she cannot because it is not in her heart to do such a thing. It works the same way when sin does not abide in your heart.

John also tells us, "*If any man **see his brother sin a sin** which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*" I John 5:16. Rightly dividing the word of truth, it becomes obvious there are sins which are not possible for a child of God to commit. These are called "*sins unto death,*" and no child of God can commit them unless they have "*fallen from grace.*" Galatians 5:4. There are also sins which a child of God may commit, which are called "*sins not unto death.*" At this point we find it necessary to understand the difference between the two. It is the Apostle Paul who gives such understanding to those who can receive it.

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,** shall inherit the kingdom of God." I Corinthians 6:9-10*

There are those prominent ministers in the church who have made the case that an adulterer could be in the act of adultery at the moment Christ returns for His church, and the adulterer would be received "if his faith is anchored in Christ."

Everyone who believes such a thing is deceived, according to the Apostle Paul, who also said, "*Let God be true, but every man a liar*" Romans 3:4. The apostle was very explicit when he said they "*shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Writing to the Galatian church, Paul gave an even longer list of those who "*shall not inherit the kingdom of God:*"

*"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings,** and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**" Galatians 5:19-21*

Notice the apostle spoke to the Corinthians of ten things a person could be, which would guarantee they would not inherit the kingdom of God. To the Galatians, he spoke of seventeen things a person could do, which would also disqualify them from the kingdom of God. The simple fact is, if a person tells a lie, they are a "liar;" if they steal, they are a "thief;" and if they commit fornication, they are a "fornicator." Jesus goes even further in His "Sermon on the Mount." He said, "*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, **Thou shalt not commit adultery:** But I say unto you, That **whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery** with her already in his heart*" Matthew 5:27-28. The Apostle John said, "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that*

continued on next page

no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" I John 3:15. Both these statements clearly reveal that sin in the heart is the equivalent to sin in our actions.

Saul of Tarsus was famous among the Jews for his hatred of Jesus Christ and his persecution of the church. When he met Jesus, however, and realized that *"Jesus is the Christ,"* he was instantly transformed from hatred to love, and set about to carry this wonderful truth to the entire world. Within a little over three years after his conversion, Saul of Tarsus received the greatest revelation ever given to man; *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."* Peter, John, and the other apostles knew Jesus was the Christ. They had been eyewitnesses of His death and resurrection, but could not comprehend the depths of what these things meant. It was Paul who, by revelation of the Spirit, connected the dots between Old Testament prophecies and their fulfilment on the cross of Christ at Calvary. Others knew Jesus had died and raised again. They knew He was *"the Christ,"* and proven to be *"The Son of God"* by His resurrection from the dead. Saul of Tarsus, later the apostle Paul, understood why Christ died and rose again.

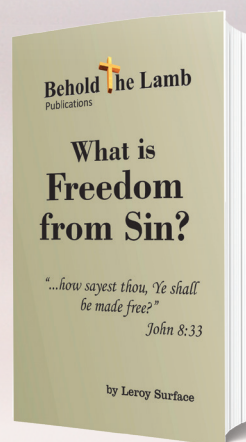
Paul explained the gospel with these simple words: **"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."** Jesus Christ died so we could be delivered from sin through our death *"with him."* If we died for our sins, we would be eternally lost. Christ died for us, so we could die with Him. *"...that the body of sin might be destroyed..."* The *"body of sin"* speaks of the entire body, and not just a part or portion. The word *"destroyed"* is from the same Greek word used to say *"the last enemy to be destroyed is death"* I Corinthians 15:6. When death is destroyed, it is not coming back; so it is when the *"body of sin"* is destroyed. **"...that henceforth we should not serve sin."** The Greek text says, *"...that from now on we would not be slaves to sin."* **"For he that is dead (crucified with Christ) is freed from sin."** In only two verses, Paul reveals what it means that Christ died for us: We died with Him, and through death with Him, we are ***"freed from sin."***

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:8-11

A believer who knows the truth of the gospel of Christ, and our identity with Him in His sufferings, death, and resurrection, also understands the words of Paul when he says, *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves...."* When Christ died for us, He did not take our punishment or penalty. He did not "pay our debt." He suffered and died on the cross as our "proxy," which means, everything they did to Him, they did to our old man of sin. Paul said, *"He died unto sin once..."* ***Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin....*** Paul continues, *"He liveth unto God ...Likewise reckon you also yourselves...."* Paul makes it clear, this is not only our confession; it is the reality of

those who know the truth and trust in Christ. He said we are ***"dead indeed,"*** which means ***"we are in fact dead to sin, but alive unto God through (in) Jesus Christ our Lord."*** The word *"through"* was erroneously translated from the Greek word *"en,"* and should be understood as *"in."* Those who have been *"freed from sin"* have no life apart from Jesus Christ. It is only those who *"abide in Him"* who *"sin not"* I John 3:6, and *"cannot sin"* I John 3:9. John also said, *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"* I John 5:11-12.

Every reality of the Christian walk is contingent upon our abiding in Christ. Regardless of how much we think we know or understand, we must have personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Everything else depends upon that reality!



FREE BOOK!
What Is Freedom From Sin?
by Leroy Surface



**To order, visit cochurch.org or write to:
Behold the Lamb • PO Box 750 • Porter, TX 77365**

Behold the Lamb
Publications