

What is Sin

by Leroy Surface

I received a letter from a lady recently who objected to our teaching, according to the KJV Bible, that a child of God is not a sinner, and does not commit sin. To prove we are all sinners, she said "It is a sin to overeat ice cream." If she is correct, I am most certainly a sinner. But is the lady correct in her definition of sin? Only the scriptures can tell us. The Apostle John wrote the following in his old age:

"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." 1 John 3:5-7

The test is found in the next verse, where the apostle writes "He that committeth sin is of the devil..." 1 John 3:8. If we are all sinners, it follows that we are "all of the devil," and if to eat too much ice cream is a sin, then we must say "Those who eat too much ice cream are of the devil." Can you see the absurdity of such a statement? So, what is sin?

The Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of Jesus' day, had a sin test which Jesus, the sinless Son of God could not pass. The Law of Moses forbid a person to work on the Sabbath Day. When Jesus healed a man who was born blind on the Sabbath, they condemned Him as a sinner. They said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day" John 9:16. When they were convinced the man had indeed been blind, but now he could see, they said "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner" John 9:24. After all, Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath Day, and His disciples gathered corn and ate it with unwashed hands on the Sabbath Day Luke 6:1.

The apostle Paul leaves no doubt in his explanation of what sin is. In fact, he labels those who are sinners. "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" 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. These can be saved, but true salvation will change them. Paul continued his exhortation; "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Jesus established that every sinful act originates in the heart of the sinner. He said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man" Matthew 15:19-20.

God's Remedy

When John saw the Holy Ghost lite upon Jesus in the form of a dove, he recognized Jesus as the Son of God and introduced Him to the people, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" John 1:29. Over sixty years later, the Apostle John wrote his first epistle in his old age and said to his congregation, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not..." 1 John 3:5-6. Jesus did not have to die on the cross to forgive our sins. God has from the beginning of time forgiven those who repented and turned to Him. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered and died on the cross as "the Lamb of God" to "take away our sin." The angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel that Christ would "make an end of sins."

For those who believe this simple truth and trust in Jesus Christ to do it, He will take sin out of their heart, and, as the Bible says, they will be "free from sin to serve God" Romans 6:22. They will understand the words of the Apostle Paul, "...I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me" Galatians 2:20. They will experience the "rest" which Jesus promised to everyone who will come to Him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

*Heaven is a holy place,
Filled with glory and with grace
Sin can never enter there;
All within its gates are pure,
From defilement kept secure
Sin can never enter there.*

Refrain:

*Sin can never enter there,
Sin can never enter there;
So if at the judgment bar
Sinful spots your soul shall mar,
You can never enter there.*

*If you hope to dwell at last,
When your life on earth is past,
In that home so bright and fair,
You must here be cleansed from sin,
Have the life of Christ within
Sin can never enter there.*

*If you cling to sin till death,
When you draw your latest breath,
You will sink in dark despair
To the regions of the lost,
Thus to prove at awful cost,
Sin can never enter there.*

Song by Charles W Naylor 1874-1950



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