



MBS095

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES CONCERNING SIN



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*Seven days shall ye
eat unleavened bread;
even the first day
ye shall put away
leaven out of
your houses.
Exodus 12:15*



This detailed study on what the Bible teaches concerning sin will be covered in eleven major divisions.

I. HEBREW, GREEK, AND ENGLISH WORDS

The first division concerns the different Hebrew, Greek, and English words that somehow convey the concept of sin. All together, there are eleven Hebrew words, seven Greek words, and ten English words. This study will deal with all of them individually.

A. The Hebrew Words

The first Hebrew word is *chata*, which is the most common Hebrew word for sin. This word is translated six different ways in the English Bible: “sin,” “fault,” “trespass,” “harm,” “blame,” and “offense.” The basic meaning of *chata* is “missing the mark.” Missing the mark implies hitting the wrong mark. It means to come short of the goal that God intended for man to reach. Every departure, every sin, is a coming short of the purpose for which man was made; it is a missing of the goal which ought to be reached while hitting the wrong mark.

The second Hebrew word is *pasha*, which is translated four different ways in the English Bible: “rebellion,” “transgression,” “sin,” and “trespass.” Its basic meaning is “to revolt” or “to refuse subjection to a rightful authority.” The primary usage, sense, and meaning of this word are found in I Kings 12:19; Job 34:37; and Isaiah 1:2. These passages utilize the primary meaning of “revolt” or “a lack of subjection.” From the primary meaning, comes a derived meaning, which is the meaning of sin as found in Psalm 51:13, Proverbs 28:21, and Isaiah 43:27.

The third Hebrew word is *maal*, which is translated three different ways in the English Bible: “trespass,” “transgression,” and “falsehood.” This particular Hebrew word points to the unfaithfulness or the treachery of sin. It represents sin as a wrong doing or a breach of trust.

The fourth Hebrew word is *avon*, which is translated four different ways in the English Bible: “perversion,” “wrong,” “miss,” and “iniquity.” The basic meaning is “to be bent,” “to be crooked,” or “to be out of shape.” It emphasizes the crookedness or distortion of sin. Some examples of this meaning are Isaiah 21:3 and Lamentations 3:9.

The fifth Hebrew word is *aven*, which is translated ten different ways in the English Bible: “vanity,” “unjust,” “unrighteous,” “sorrow,” “mourning,” “affliction,” “evil,” “mischief,” “wickedness,” and “iniquity.” The basic root meaning is “nothingness,” “a sense of nothingness.” It deals with a course of conduct which, in the end, will prove unprofitable to the doer. There is a stamp of nothingness and unreality upon every departure from the law of God. It emphasizes sin as being unreal in that it is not in conformity with the law of God. It presents the evil devices of men in their false, hollow, and unreal aspects. Because an idol was viewed by the prophets as a thing of naught, a vain and empty thing, this particular Hebrew word was often connected with the sin of idolatry. Some examples are Hosea 4:15; 5:8; and Amos 5:5.

The sixth Hebrew word is *rasha*, which is translated three different ways in the English Bible: “impiety,” “wickedness,” and “wicked one.” Originally, it emphasized the concept of activity. By connecting the concept of activity with sin, this particular Hebrew word emphasized the tossing and confusion in which the wicked one lives. It emphasizes the perpetual agitation that the wicked ones, the sinners, cause upon others. This concept is used in Job 3:17 and Isaiah 57:20-21.

The seventh Hebrew word is *ra*, which is translated a total of nineteen different ways in the English Bible: “evil,” “calamity,” “distress,” “adversity,” “grief,” “affliction,” “misery,” “sadness,” “sorrow,” “trouble,” “sore,” “noisome,” “hurt,” “heavy,” “vex,” “wretchedness,” “harm,” “ill,” and “mischief.” The basic root meaning of this word is “to break up” or “to ruin.” It binds together into one word both the wicked deed and the consequence of that wicked deed. Because his act is an injury both to himself and to everyone around him, this word often refers specifically to the evil one. For the most part, this particular word implies that which is injurious rather than that which is a moral evil. It emphasizes more the rough exterior aspect of wrongdoing rather than the interior of morality. So this word emphasizes sin as a breach of harmony or the breaking up what is good and desirable in man's society.

The eighth Hebrew word is *amal*, which is translated six different ways in the English Bible: “travail,” “toil,” “trouble,” “worrisome,” “sorrow,” and “pain.” The word *amal* emphasizes the result of sin, which is labor. More specifically, it emphasizes labor in its toilsome aspect. Sin has made life a burden and has turned work into toil and travail. This particular word emphasizes the result of the first sin, the sin of Adam, which was toil in labor.

The ninth Hebrew word is *aval*, which is translated six different ways in the English Bible: “iniquity,” “unjust,” “unrighteousness,” “ungodly,” “perverse,” and “wicked.” The basic root meaning of *aval* is “a departure from that which is equal and right.” It views and designates sin as the lack of integrity in wrongdoing. This concept is found in Malachi 2:6.

The tenth Hebrew word is *avar*, which is translated for the most part by one English word: “transgression.” It emphasizes sin as crossing over the boundary of right and entering into the forbidden land of wrong. Transgression requires a specific boundary or border to cross over, and that border is a specific law or commandment of God. Once one has sinned, he has crossed over the boundary of right and entered into the forbidden land of wrong. This concept is found in Joshua 6:7 and 8:1.

And the eleventh Hebrew word is *asheim*, which is translated two ways in the English Bible: “guilt” and “trespass.” It emphasizes sin that is committed through error, negligence, or ignorance. When this type of sin comes to a person's knowledge, at that point, he is guilty and should regard himself as having offended. Perhaps the best picture of this is the *asheim* offering or the trespass offering, detailed in Leviticus 4:13-14, 22-23, 27-28 and 5:2-6.

B. The Greek Words

There are a total of seven different Greek words which carry the concept of sin. The first word is *hamartia*, which is the primary Greek word translated as “sin.” It corresponds to the major Hebrew word, *chata*, and they both have the same basic meaning: “to miss the mark.” Conversely, to miss the mark means to hit the wrong mark. This word, used in the sense of missing the mark, is found in Romans 3:23, where those who sin fall short of God's righteousness.

The second Greek word is *parabasis*, translated for the most part as the word “transgression.”

The third Greek word is *adikia*, translated as “unrighteousness.” It emphasizes the lack of righteousness, which is a characteristic of sin.

The fourth Greek word is *asebeia*, translated as “impiety.” It emphasizes the lack of holiness that sin contains. This particular

concept is found in I Timothy 1:9; I Peter 4:18; and Jude 15.

The fifth Greek word is *anomia*, which carries the meaning “lawlessness.” This word emphasizes sin as having contempt for the law. It also emphasizes sin as being in violation of the law; therefore, it is sometimes translated as “iniquity.” This word emphasizes sin as being iniquitous. One example of this meaning is found in I John 3:4.

The sixth Greek word is *poneria*, which means “depravity.” It signifies “rapacity,” which is the fruit of covetousness.

The seventh Greek word is *epithumia*, which has the meaning of “desire” or “lust.” It emphasizes sin as a desire, particularly a desire or lust for that which is forbidden.

C. The English Words

To fully comprehend the biblical teaching concerning sin, one must consider ten specific English words that are based on the eleven Hebrew words and the seven Greek words.

The first English word is “transgression.” Transgression emphasizes the overstepping of a boundary, the violation of a specific commandment. The word “transgression” emphasizes a specific type of sin: a deliberate act against a known commandment of God.

The second English word is “iniquity,” which emphasizes that which is altogether wrong. Some things, by themselves, are neutral; they become wrong only in the way they are used. However, in the case of iniquity, this is something which is altogether wrong; there is no correct or righteous way to use it.

The third English word summarizing the biblical usage of sin is “error.” Sin is an error in the sense that it is a disregard for that which is right. It is an error in the sense of going astray.

The fourth English word is “sin.” The word “sin” should always be understood in its broader meaning, while all the other words basically emphasize a specific type or concept of sin. In its overall, general meaning, which covers all the grounds, sin is a coming short or a falling short; it is a missing of the mark and a hitting of the wrong mark.

The fifth English word is “wickedness.” Wickedness emphasizes the outworking and expression of the human will in its depraved state. When the human will works out its desire in its depravity, the result is wickedness.

The sixth English word is “evil.” This word for sin means “a wrong.” It is a wrong in that it is anything and everything that stands in

opposition to God. That which opposes God is a wrong; and that which is wrong is sin.

The seventh English word is “ungodliness.” This particular word emphasizes sin as lacking any fear of God. It is living a life of ungodliness with no concern that it may bring about divine discipline and judgment.

The eighth English word is “disobedience.” This word emphasizes sin as the unwillingness to be led or guided in the way of truth as revealed by the Word of God. The disobedience spoken of here may be active disobedience such as transgression, or it may be passive disobedience. It is always the result of an unwillingness to be led or guided in the way of truth as revealed by the Word of God.

The ninth word is “unbelief,” which emphasizes sin as being a lack of trust and faith in God. Unbelief is a failure to trust God, which is sin. The Scriptures teach that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). The specific type of sin that is not of faith is unbelief.

And the tenth word is “lawlessness,” which emphasizes sin as going contrary to the law, lacking conformity to the law. It is living a life of lawlessness, a life which does not see itself as being bound by divine law (I Jn. 3:4-10).

In particular, these ten English words help to define and summarize the Hebrew and Greek words for sin. These various words show that sin covers a wide spectrum. Sin is not merely a lack of something in particular and cannot be defined merely by one particular aspect. In fact, many false concepts of sin are based upon seeing sin as covering only one aspect. For example, some view sin as merely a limitation of being. Others see sin as merely a lack of love. Some see sin as just a desire for that which is wrong. Some see sin as merely a principle of evil. Some define sin as merely selfishness. Some see sin as merely an illusion. Some see sin as merely a violation of the law. While all of these concepts are certainly involved in the biblical teaching of sin, none of these by itself is an adequate definition of sin; all of these variations must be considered in order to understand the full concept of sin.

II. THE DEFINITION OF SIN

The second major division of this study has to do with the definition of sin. In light of the various Hebrew, Greek, and English usages, how is sin to be defined? In developing a definition of the biblical teaching of sin, it will be necessary to cover this division in three units.

A. The Elements

From the various words that are used for sin, five specific elements

need to be included when dealing with the definition of sin: first, sin is selfishness; secondly, sin is a transgression of known law; thirdly, sin is a wrong attitude and a wrong desire of the will or the self; fourthly, sin is unbelief; and fifth, sin is the voluntary disobedience of an explicit command of God.

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B. The Simple Definition

A very simple definition that includes all of the above elements is: "Sin is anything contrary to the character of God." That simple definition covers all the various elements: selfishness is contrary to the character of God; transgression of known law is contrary to the character of God; a wrong attitude and desire of self are contrary to God's character; unbelief goes contrary to God's character; and voluntary disobedience of an explicit command of God goes contrary to God's character. So the simple definition of sin as being anything contrary to the character of God covers all usages and concepts of sin in Scripture. Furthermore, it covers all eleven of the Hebrew words, the seven Greek words, and the ten English words.

A slightly more detailed definition would be: "Sin is any lack or want of conformity to the character of God, whether it is an act, a disposition, or a state."

C. The Essential Nature of Sin

The third unit concerning the definition of sin is the essential nature of sin. Here, ten things should be noted. First, sin is a specific type of evil.

Secondly, sin is a lack of conformity to or a transgression of the law of God. It is a failure to do what the law demands (Jas. 4:17). To fail in one point of the law is to be guilty of breaking the whole law (Gal. 3:10; Jas. 2:10). Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. While it may lessen the degree of punishment, it does not lessen the duration of punishment (Lk. 12:47-48). The lack of ability to obey is not the measure of obligation or test of what sin is; sin is there whether or not one feels he is able to keep the law. Nor is the feeling of guilt necessary to the fact of sin; sin is present regardless of whether or not one feels guilty. Sin is any lack or want of conformity to or a transgression of the law of God.

Thirdly, sin is a principle or a nature, as well as an act (Mat. 15:19). As an act, sin produces guilt; as a principle, sin produces pollution (Jer. 17:9; Lk. 6:45). Because sin is both a nature or principle, as well as an act, it produces a sixfold result. First, the understanding of man is darkened (Rom. 1:31; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:18). Secondly, it produces an evil and vain imagination (Gen. 6:5, 12; Rom. 1:21). Thirdly, it produces vile affections or passions (Rom. 1:26-27). Fourthly, it produces corrupt speech (Eph. 4:29). Fifth, it produces a defiled mind and conscience (Titus 1:15). And sixth, it produces an enslaved and

depraved will (Rom. 7:18-19).

The fourth essential nature of sin is that of selfishness because, ultimately, sin emphasizes the sinner himself as being primary as over against the primacy of God.

The fifth thing about the essential nature of sin is that sin is also lawlessness (I Jn. 3:4). It is lawlessness in that sin contains the aspect of a failure to live in accordance with the law and commandments of God.

Sixth, sin has an absolute character; it is not some vague influence (Mat. 10:32-33; 12:30; Lk. 11:13; Jas. 2:10).

Seventh, sin always has a relationship to God and His will (Rom. 1:32; 2:12-14; 4:15; 5:13; Jas. 2:9-10).

Eighth, sin includes both guilt and pollution. Concerning guilt, it makes man liable for punishment (Rom. 3:19; 5:18; Eph. 2:3). Concerning pollution, all men are guilty of moral pollution in Adam because they are born of a corrupt nature. Moral pollution means that there is a disposition toward evil (Job 14:4; Is. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 4:17-19).

Ninth, sin has its roots in the heart. Sin influences the intellect, the emotion, and the will, and it finds expression through the body (Prov. 4:23; Jer. 17:9; Mat. 15:19-20; Lk. 6:45; Heb. 3:12).

And tenth, sin does not consist of outward acts only. There is a three stage progression to sinful acts: first, sin consists of a sinful state (Mat. 5:22, 28); secondly, the sinful state becomes the basis for sinful habits (Rom. 7:7); and thirdly, these sinful habits result in sinful deeds (Rom. 7:17, 24).

III. THE ORIGIN OF SIN

The third division of this study deals with what the Bible teaches concerning the origin of sin. To fully comprehend this concept, it will be necessary to deal with it in four categories.

A. In Relationship to God

One thing that the Bible teaches in no uncertain terms is that God cannot sin. God is incapable of sinning; He doesn't even have the ability to sin. Yet, sin was anticipated in the foreknowledge of God and was included in the plan of God. This is evident because the plan of God included a Savior from before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Although God is not the author of sin, He is the Creator of the one who is himself the author of sin.

B. In Relationship to Satan

The closest the Bible comes to revealing the actual origin of sin is in relationship to Satan. Concerning Satan, Ezekiel 28:15 states: *unrighteousness was found in you*.

At some point, Satan was found to have unrighteousness or sin. The first creature to sin was Satan. The nature of that first sin was Satan's desire to be like God (Is. 14:14). Yeshua (Jesus) said that Satan did not abide in the truth (Jn. 8:44). So, the first sinner was Satan; and the first sin was the sin of pride, expressed in Satan's desire to be like God. This is the actual origin of sin. Again, God is not the originator or author of sin, but He is the Creator of the one who is the author of sin: Satan.

C. In Relationship to Angels

The origin of sin in relationship to angels is found in Revelation 12:3-4, which points out that one third of the angels fell with Satan when they participated in the satanic revolt against the authority of God. Thus, sin originated with Satan, then one third of the angelic host fell with him.

D. In Relationship to Man

With man, sin began in the Garden of Eden with Adam's fall (Rom. 5:12). The nature of the first human sin is the same as that of the first angelic sin: the desire to be like God (Gen. 3:5). The actual act of sin was disobedience to a specific commandment (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6).

IV. THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

The fourth division deals with the clear teaching of Scripture that sin is universal. The Bible clearly teaches that, with the exception of Jesus of Nazareth, all who are born of Adam and Eve are guilty of sin. This fact can be seen in two ways: by direct statements and by other implications.

First, there are clear, direct statements from both the Old and New Testaments showing that everyone is guilty of sin (I Kg. 8:46; Ps. 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:9, 19, 20, 23; Gal. 3:22; Jas. 3:2; I Jn. 1:8).

Secondly, the universality of sin is evident by three implications. The first implication is that the Bible teaches that man is a sinner from birth (Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; Jn. 3:6). The second implication is that the Bible teaches that even infants are sinful, which is the reason some infants sometimes die (Rom. 5:12-14). And the third implication is that all men, including children, are under condemnation (Jn. 3:3; Eph. 2:3).

The result of the universality of sin is fivefold. First, man is subject to death in all of its forms: physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. Secondly, it means that man is born in a state of depravity; he

is born spiritually dead. Thirdly, man is guilty of personal sin. Fourthly, man is in a state of being under sin. And, fifth, it means that man is under the continuous influence of Satan.

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V. MAN'S ESTATE UNDER SIN

The fifth division deals with what the Bible teaches concerning man's estate under sin. Man's condition is that he is living under an estate of sin. This is taught by Romans 3:9; 7:14; and Galatians 3:22. This division will be covered in two units.

A. The Meaning of Living Under Sin

The Greek word translated “under” refers to a system that holds dominion over a person. It is a divine reckoning that is to be considered as true. By divine decree, man was placed in a state under sin. He is in a system in which sin holds dominion over every person. By divine decree, all Jews and Gentiles are now placed into that estate in which human merit is worthless insofar as salvation is concerned. Every human merit is discarded to the end that the uncompromising, saving grace of God may be exercised to those who believe.

Living in an estate under sin puts man in a unique relationship to Satan. According to II Corinthians 4:3-4, Satan blinds the mind of the unbelievers who live in the estate under sin. In Ephesians 2:1-2, it is Satan who now works in the sons of disobedience. According to Colossians 1:13, being in the estate under sin means “to live in Satan's kingdom of darkness.” According to I John 5:19, because the world is in an estate under sin, the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one.

B. The Remedy for Man's Estate

The remedy for man's estate under sin is not to stand on one's own merit, but to stand in the merit of the Messiah. As noted above, man's estate under sin means that every human merit is discarded as having no value in salvation. When one stands in the Messiah's merit, he switches estates. In other words, he moves out of the estate of being under sin and moves into the new estate of being under grace (Rom. 6:14).

VI. THE SIN NATURE: ORIGINAL SIN

The sixth division has to do with what the Bible teaches concerning the sin nature or original sin. The major, in depth passage that deals with this topic is Romans 1:18-3:20. This division will be covered in five areas.

A. The Meaning of Original Sin

What is the meaning of original sin? Actually, the term “original sin” has two different meanings and can be used in two ways. Sometimes the term “original sin” refers to the first sin committed by a human being, Adam; this is emphasized in Romans 5:19. In this sense, original sin means that Adam's sin brought original guilt and original

pollution. This original pollution caused total depravity and inability so that even man's best works are still radically defective. The term "original sin" can refer to Adam's sin.

The second and more common usage of the term "original sin" refers to the sin nature for two reasons. First, the sin nature is called original sin because it originated with Adam and flows from the first parents, Adam and Eve, so that everyone inherits this sin nature. Secondly, the sin nature is sometimes called original sin because it is the origin of all other sins, therefore, all people commit acts of sin due to their sin nature.

A good definition of the sin nature is: "The sin nature is the capacity to do all things, either good or bad, that in no way commend a person to God." This means that every person enters the human race as a sinner and commits acts of sin because he is a sinner. Adam and Eve are the only two people who ever became sinners by sinning. All their descendants sin because they are sinners. Only Adam and Eve died spiritually by sinning; their descendants are born spiritually dead. Because they are born with a sin nature, they commit acts of sin.

Furthermore, the sin nature is a corruption of the very essence of the soul. The sin nature is not an essential element of the immaterial part of man. Adam and Eve lived for a period of time without a sin nature. Yeshua existed all of His life without a sin nature. The sin nature is a capacity to do all those things, both good and bad, that in no way commend a person to God.

B. The Concept Taught in Scripture

The concept of the sin nature is taught heavily throughout both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the sin nature is spoken of in Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Job 15:14, 16; Psalm 58:1-3; 94:11; 130:3; 143:2; Ecclesiastics 7:20; 9:3; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 13:23; 16:12; and 17:9. In the New Testament, the sin nature is spoken of in Matthew 7:11; 12:34; 15:19; Romans 6:20; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 2:13; I Peter 4:2; I John 1:8; and 2:16. From these many examples in both the Old and New Testaments, it is very clear that the Bible does indeed teach the concept of a sin nature and original sin.

C. The Transmission of the Sin Nature

The sin nature is transmitted by what is called "mediate transmission." This means that it comes from Adam to all of his descendants through the parents. It does not come directly from Adam to each individual. Rather, it comes from Adam, through all of his descendants, through our parents, to us. Conversely, children inherit their sin nature from their parents, and parents from their parents, all the way back to Adam (Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3).

D. The Penalty for the Sin Nature

The penalty for the sin nature and original sin involves two things.

The first penalty is total depravity. By way of definition, total depravity does not mean that every man is as bad as he can be. Rather, total depravity means “the unmeritorious state of man before God.” None of man’s works carries any merit before God. The second penalty for the sin nature is spiritual death. Because man inherits the sin nature upon conception, he is born spiritually dead (Gen. 2:17; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1, 5).

The penalties for the sin nature carry with them four specific results. First, there is a corruption of the very nature of the soul in that the soul is rendered spiritually dead. The second result is that there is the loss of original righteousness. When Adam and Eve were created, they had original righteousness, but they lost it when they sinned. Now, the inclination of man is toward evil. The third result is that it is the nature of sin to include guilt and corruption. Guilt refers to the outward aspect of sin; corruption refers to the inward aspect of sin. The fourth result is that the sin nature retains its character even in believers; this is the reason believers still sin.

E. The Remedy for the Sin Nature

The remedy for the sin nature involves three things, with each remedy carrying its own result.

First, the remedy for the sin nature involves regeneration. Regeneration, which means “to be born again,” renders the dead spirit alive. The dead spirit, with which man is born, is quickened at the moment of belief. The result of regeneration is that the believer becomes spiritually alive.

Secondly, the remedy for the sin nature involves redemption. Redemption brings with it a new nature or a new capacity to serve God with righteousness. Although the believer still retains his sin nature, as a result of redemption, the believer receives a new nature. Thus he has a new capacity to serve God with righteousness.

And thirdly, the remedy for the sin nature involves the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who now provides power for victory over the judged sin nature. The result is that the believer can gain victory over the sin nature by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When one believes on the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, he is regenerated, redeemed, and he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The overall result is spiritual life.

VII. PERSONAL SIN

The seventh division deals with what the Bible teaches concerning the category of personal sin. This division will be studied in five specific areas.

A. The Meaning of Personal Sin

One key verse that deals with the concept of personal sin is Romans 3:23: *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.*

Personal sin means acts of sin committed by individuals before they believe on Yeshua as their Savior or Messiah. While the sin nature is inward, personal sin is outward; it is the act of sin. These acts of sin are committed because man is by nature a sinner because he inherited the sin nature. Therefore, personal sins are acts of sin committed by individuals before they accept Jesus as their Messiah. These may be willful acts or they may be acts committed out of ignorance, but they are still acts of sin. The category of personal sin includes everything in daily life that is against or fails to conform to the character of God. Personal sin can be divided into various classifications. For example, as related to divine requirements, personal sins could be those of commission or omission. As related to object, personal sins could be directed against God, against a neighbor, or against oneself. As related to compass or direction, personal sins could be inward of the soul or outward of body. As related to chargeableness, personal sin could be chargeable to oneself alone or to others as partakers. As related to intention, personal sin could be voluntary or involuntary; that is, done out of ignorance or committed because of passion. As related to sinfulness, personal sins could come in greater and lesser degree, because the Bible does teach the concept of lesser and greater sins. As related to subject, personal sins could be committed by the saved and unsaved or to the saved and unsaved or against the saved and unsaved. As related to God's justice, personal sin could be dealt with by God, either because of God's vengeance or on the basis of His longsuffering. As related to forgiveness, personal sins are either forgiven or unforgiven. As related to cause, personal sins could be caused either by ignorance, impudence, malice, helplessness, or premeditation. As related to penalty, personal sins are partially judged in this world or they will be judged in the world to come.

B. The Concept Taught in Scripture

There are a number of Scriptures that teach the concept of personal sin. For example, in I Kings 8:50, personal sins are violations of God's law; in Psalm 19:12-13, personal sins can be presumptuous sins; Psalm 51:4 teaches that personal sins are against God; Psalm 90:8 speaks of secret sins, which are personal sins; Luke 12:47-48 speaks of sins of both ignorance and of knowledge; Luke 15:21 teaches that personal sins are against heaven; Luke 23:34 teaches that personal sins can also be those of ignorance; John 19:11 speaks of greater and lesser personal sins; Acts 3:17-19 also speaks of sins committed out of ignorance; I Corinthians 6:9-10 speaks about sinful actions; Galatians 5:19-21 speaks about sinful acts; and I Timothy 1:13 again speaks of personal sins committed out of ignorance. The clear teaching of Scripture is the truth of personal sins that arise out of man's sinful nature.

C. The Transmission of Personal Sin

Again, personal sin originates from the sin nature; it is because he has a sin nature that man commits acts of sin. The sin nature is transmitted from Adam through the parents. The sin nature is inherited from parents upon conception, and then acts of sin are committed because of that sin nature.

The consequences of personal sin may affect one's descendants for four generations because, according to Exodus 34:6-7, the justice of God sometimes requires that the sins of the fathers be visited upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

D. The Penalty for Personal Sin

The two facets concerning the penalty for personal sin are: guilt and the degree of punishment. First, because of personal sin, the unsaved sinner stands guilty before a righteous and holy God. The second facet of the penalty for personal sin is that they add to the degree of punishment. The fact is that there will be degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire is taught in Luke 12:47-48. This is eternal punishment.

The result of the penalty for personal sin will be a state of lostness. If one does not believe on Yeshua the Messiah in this life, he is lost forever.

E. The Remedy for Personal Sin

Concerning the remedy for personal sin, there are two facets involved: forgiveness and justification. The first remedy for personal sin is forgiveness. When a person receives Yeshua as Savior, he is forgiven of his sins. This means that God removes the sins of the one who has exercised faith in the substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah. The first penalty, guilt, is removed by forgiveness.

The second remedy for personal sin is justification. Justification means "to be declared righteous." The one who believes on the Lord Jesus the Messiah is declared to be righteous. Justification also involves a declaration of non guilt. It is a declaration of the addition of the Messiah's righteousness to the believing sinner so that he is no longer in danger of the Lake of Fire.

The result of the remedy for personal sin is personal salvation.

VIII. IMPUTED SIN

The eighth division of this study deals with what the Bible teaches concerning the category of sin known as imputed sin. This division will also be covered in five areas.

A. The Meaning of Imputed Sin

As to meaning, the word “impute” means “to reckon to one's account.” It means to attribute or to reckon something to someone. The Bible speaks of three great imputations. The first imputation is the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race. The second imputation is the imputation of the sin of man to the Messiah; this occurred on the cross. The third imputation is the imputation of the righteousness of the Messiah to the believer; this happens when one believes. This study focuses only on the first great imputation, which is the foundation for the other two.

The first great imputation is when Adam's sin was imputed to the human race. All mankind is viewed as having participated in Adam's disobedience and therefore all mankind carries the same guilt. Man is not only guilty of his own personal sins because he has a sin nature, but man is also guilty because he is viewed as having participated in Adam's sin. The best way to picture this is by using the concept of the power of attorney. When someone has your power of attorney, he has the full right to act on your behalf. His actions on your behalf are viewed as being your own actions. If he does something illegal, you share in the responsibility; to some degree, there will be the imputation of the attorney's guilt on yourself because you granted him power of attorney. Adam was given the power of attorney for the human race; therefore, when he sinned, all humanity sinned.

From the biblical perspective, God sees all humanity as being “in Adam.” Thus, all men are reckoned as being guilty, not only of their own sin, but also of Adam's sin.

B. The Concept Taught in Scripture

The one key passage that teaches the concept of imputed sin is Romans 5:12-21. The key verse in this passage is verse 12: *Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*

In the way it is phrased, the all who sinned are in connection with Adam's sin. It is through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin. The reason death was passed on to all human beings is because all are viewed as having sinned “in Adam.” It is because of this imputation that even infants sometimes die, even though they may not have had an opportunity to sin.

C. The Transmission of Imputed Sin

Besides the concept of the power of attorney, another way to explain how imputed sin is transmitted is by the theological term “Natural Headship.” Natural Headship means that imputed sin is transmitted immediately from Adam to the individual. The sin nature was transmitted by mediate transmission in that it went from Adam, through the parents, to the individual. Imputed sin, however, is by means of immediate transmission in that it goes from Adam directly

to each individual of the human race, not through the parents. As far as transmission of imputed sin is concerned, it is transmitted from Adam to the individual by immediate transmission.

By virtue of the organic unity of the human race in Adam, the sin of Adam is imputed immediately to all of his descendants. In Scripture, this concept known as “seminal relationship.” One example of seminal relationship is in Hebrews 7:9-10: *And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, has paid tithes; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.*

The background to this passage is Genesis 14, where Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. The author of the Book of Hebrews points out that when Abraham paid tithes, Levi, who was a descendant of Abraham, was also viewed as having paid tithes to Melchizedek by means of imputation through a seminal relationship. Levi wasn't even born when that event occurred. Nevertheless, because he was in the loins of his father, Abraham, Levi was viewed as having paid tithes to Melchizedek.

The entire human race was “in the loins of Adam.” Because of that seminal relationship, when Adam sinned, all humanity is viewed as having participated in the sin. Adam's sin is imputed to all mankind because it is also reckoned as being ours. Romans 5:12 means that death passed upon all men because all sinned “in Adam,” who was the natural head of the human race by virtue of a seminal relationship.

Whereas the sin nature is transmitted through mediate transmission in that it comes from Adam, through our parents, to us, imputed sin is transmitted by immediate transmission in that it comes directly from Adam to us.

D. The Penalty for Imputed Sin

According to Romans 5:12, the penalty for imputed sin is physical death. This was already taught by the Old Testament in Genesis 3:19. This is also taught in the New Testament in Romans 5:14 and I Corinthians 15:20-23, specifically the phrase in verse 22: *For as in Adam all die.*

E. The Remedy for Imputed Sin

The remedy for imputed sin is that third great imputation mentioned earlier: the imputed righteousness of the Messiah. This is taught in the same context as imputed sin. In the context of Romans 5:12-21, verse 21 states: *that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Another passage that teaches that the remedy for imputed sin is the imputed righteousness of the Messiah is II Corinthians 5:21. The verse begins with the words: *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf.* This is dealing with the second great imputation: the imputation of the sin of man upon the Messiah. The verse then states: *that we*

might become the righteousness of God in him.

This refers the third great imputation: the imputation of the righteousness of the Messiah upon the believer.

This truth is also taught in I Corinthians 15:20-26, 54-56. Verse 22 states: *For as in Adam all die, so also in the Messiah shall all be made alive.*

IX. SIN IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

The ninth division deals with what the Bible teaches concerning sin in the believer's life. As with the other categories of sin, this one will also be discussed in five areas.

A. The Meaning of Sin in the Believer's Life

Sin in the believer's life means acts of sin committed by individual believers. In that sense, it is similar to personal sin committed by unbelievers. These acts of personal sin committed by individual believers may be either willful acts or acts done out of ignorance.

B. The Concept Taught in Scripture

The fact that believers still commit acts of sin is clearly taught by Scripture. In I Timothy 1:15, Paul told Timothy that he, Paul, is the chief of sinners. Paul was an apostle, and he perhaps reached the epitome of spirituality that is attainable by man in this life. Yet he did not use the past tense when writing the letter to Timothy toward the end of his life. He did not say, "I was" or "I used to be" the chief of sinners. Regarding sinners, Paul used the present tense: I am chief. He still considered himself as being a sinner by nature and saw himself as committing acts of sin.

A key passage that speaks about sin in the believer's life is I John 1:8-10: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

The Book of I John was written to believers and speaks about believers. In verse 8, John pointed out the fact that believers still have the sin nature. In verse 9, he mentioned that believers commit particular sins that need to be confessed. In verse 10, he mentioned the fact of personal sins: If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. By using the pronoun we, John includes himself in this statement. According to Scripture, believers do commit personal acts of sin; there is sin in the believer's life.

C. The Relationship to Other Categories of Sin

What is the relationship of sin in the believer's life to man's estate under sin, to the sin nature, to personal sin, and to imputed sin?

In relationship to man's estate under sin, the believer is no longer

living in the estate under sin; rather, the believer is now in the new estate of being “under grace.”

In relationship to the sin nature, the believer still has his sin nature. Just as the sin nature is the source of personal sins committed by unbelievers, even so the sin nature is the source of personal sins committed by the believer. The difference between the believer and the unbeliever is not that one has a sin nature and one does not. The difference is that the believer also has a new nature. He has his newborn human spirit, which wars against the old sin nature. This war is described in Galatians 5:16-17 and Romans 7:15-25.

In relationship to personal sin, three things should be noted. First, the believer has been saved from the power of sin. Whereas the unbeliever is a slave to sin, he has to commit acts of sin; the believer has been saved from the power of sin; he does not have to commit acts of sin (Rom. 6:1-8:13; I Jn. 1:1-2:2). Secondly, the believer is to reckon this fact as being true and live like it (Rom. 6:1-8:13). Thirdly, the believer must now fight the spiritual warfare against the flesh, the devil, and the world.

In relationship to imputed sin, the believer's position of being “in Adam” is counteracted by his new position of being in Christ. For the believer, physical death is no longer the penalty for imputed sin. Physical death is merely a means of leaving this world and entering into Heaven. Furthermore, when the believer dies, his future resurrection is guaranteed (I Cor. 15:50-57).

D. The Penalty for Sin in the Believer's Life

There are four possible penalties for sin in the believer's life. The first penalty is the loss of fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:6). As part of God's family, when the believer commits sin, he breaks the fellowship he has with God. This fellowship must be restored by means of confession (I Jn. 1:9).

A second penalty for sin in the believer's life is chastisement. This will occur if he does not confess his sins. If he does not confess his sins to receive family forgiveness for them, God will chasten and discipline him (I Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:4-11).

A third possible penalty for sin in the believer's life is excommunication from the local church. This is especially true for personal sins that are of the most gross type, the kind of personal sins that are public and bring dishonor to the local church. One example of this is found in I Corinthians 5:1-5, where the public sin was that of a member who was sleeping with his stepmother. This was happening with the church's knowledge, but the church was not exercising church discipline. It is this kind of public sin that brings shame upon a local congregation and could result in excommunication.

A fourth possible penalty for sin in the believer's life is physical death. This is a natural consequence of chastisement and excommunication if it is taken to its full extent. Earlier, it was mentioned that physical death is no longer a penalty for the believer, but merely a means of leaving this world in order to enter into Heaven. However, there is one exception to this rule. If a believer refuses to confess his sin after suffering a period of chastisement, the final form of chastisement could be physical death. Furthermore, if a person does not respond and repent, the natural result of excommunication is physical death inflicted upon the believer by Satan, not by the congregation. Physical death as a penalty for a believer's sins is mentioned in I Corinthians 5:5 and 11:28-32. It will not, however, affect one's salvation.

E. The Remedy for Sin in the Believer's Life

The remedy for sin in the believer's life has two aspects: preventative remedies and applied remedies. Regarding preventative remedies, these are to keep the believer from committing acts of sin. There are four such preventative remedies. The first such remedy is meditating upon the Scriptures (Ps. 119:11). The second preventative remedy is the intercessory work of the Messiah (Jn. 17:15; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The third preventative remedy is the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit by which the believer has the power to resist sin (Jn. 7:37-39; Rom. 8:9). And the fourth preventative remedy is walking in the light of the Word of God (I Jn 1:7).

Regarding applied remedies, one remedy to apply after one has sinned is self examination (I Cor. 11:31-32); the believer is to examine himself to see if there is sin in his life. If there is, then the second remedy to apply is confession (I Jn. 1:9); he is to confess his sins; he is to agree with God that it is sin; and he is to make an admission of participation. Ideally, this should be done whenever one becomes aware of his sins. The Bible provides two timetables in regard to applied remedies: Ephesians 4:26 teaches that confession should be made before bedtime; and I Corinthians 11:27-32 points out that confession should be made before one participates in the Ordinance of Communion.

The result of the remedy for sin in the believer's life is twofold: first, forgiveness of personal sins in the believer's life; and secondly, the restoration of family fellowship.

X. THE FINAL TRIUMPH OVER ALL SIN

The tenth division deals with the final triumph over all sin. The Bible teaches that the day will come when believers will have final victory over all sin. That day will come with the resurrection of the body (I Cor. 15:35-49; Rom. 8:23). The resurrection of the body means redemption from the body of sin because, when the body is resurrected, it will be free of the sin nature. For the Church saints, this

will occur at the Rapture, some time before the Tribulation. For the Old Testaments saints and the Tribulation saints, this will occur during the Seventy-five Day Interval between the end of the Tribulation and the start of the Messianic Kingdom.

When the Bible portrays the final abode of all believers of all ages, it describes them as being totally free of sin. This final abode, in which all believers will have final victory over all sin, is found in Hebrews 12:2-24; II Peter 3:7-13; and Revelation 20:7-22:5. When all believers live together in the New Jerusalem upon the new earth, they will have final triumph over all sin. The Church saints will have final triumph over sin even in the Kingdom. However, there will be those in the Kingdom with natural bodies and a sin nature. Only in the Eternal Order will everyone have final triumph over sin.

XI. THE NATURE OF THE LAW

The eleventh division will conclude with what the Bible teaches concerning the nature of the law. This division will be covered in five areas.

A. The Usages of the Word

In Scripture, there are six usages of the word “law.” First, the word “law” is sometimes used to refer to the Mosaic Law. In fact, the majority of times that the Bible uses the term it is a reference to the Law of Moses. Two examples of this usage are: Romans 6:14-15 and Galatians 4:4.

A second usage is the term “elemental law” or “moral law.” This is not a specific commandment of Moses as such, but merely the moral law, basic law, or elemental law found in society. Two examples of this usage are: Romans 4:15 and 5:13.

A third usage of the term is “civil law.” This usage is found in Daniel 6:8 and 12.

A fourth usage of the word “law” is the revealed will of God; such as, Psalm 119:18.

A fifth usage of the word “law” in Scripture is as a principle of operation; this is found in Romans 7:21 and 8:2.

And a sixth way the word “law” is used is the Law of the Messiah.

Like the Law of Moses, the Law of the Messiah contains a body of specific commandments; such as in I Corinthians 9:21 and Galatians 6:2. In the New Testament, the word “law” is found a total of two hundred nine times, most of these are found in two books: Romans and

Galatians. In the Book of Romans, the word is used seventy seven times; in the Book of Galatians, it is used thirty times. Throughout the rest of the New Testament, it is used another one hundred two times. Just focusing on the New Testament alone, the word “law” is used thirteen different ways: the law of works (Rom. 3:27); the law of faith (Rom. 3:27); the law of God (Rom. 7:22, 25; 8:7); the law of the mind (Rom. 7:23); the law of sin (Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:2); the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2); the law of death (Rom. 8:2); the law of righteousness (Rom. 9:31); the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2); the law of the Jews (Acts 25:8); the law of liberty (Jas. 1:25; 2:12); the law of the Lord (Lk. 2:23, 24, 39); and the Law of Moses (Lk. 2:22; 24:44; Jn. 7:23; Acts 13:39; 15:5; 28:23; I Cor. 9:9).

Although there is a wide variety of usage of the word “law” throughout the Old and New Testaments, the primary usage in both testaments is for the Law of Moses. Violation of any law that is applied by God to man results in sin, whether it is the moral law, the Law of Moses, or the Law of the Messiah.

B. The Meaning of Law

The discovery of these various usages of the word “law” in the Scriptures leads to a discussion on the meaning of law. Perhaps the best and simplest way of defining the term “law” as used in Scripture is: “Law is the expression of the divine will, enforced by power.”

That simple meaning of law carries four implications. The first implication is that there is a Lawgiver. That Lawgiver is God. The second implication is that there is a subject who receives the law and must obey it. Man is the subject and he must obey any law given by the Lawgiver as applicable to him. The third implication is that this law is an expression of the divine will. Because the Lawgiver is God Himself, what He hands down as law is the expression of His divine will. The fourth implication is that He is able to enforce His will; He has the power to enforce His will and may use His power whenever He deems necessary.

Having defined the meaning of law and its implications, it must be pointed out that there are two extremes concerning law. One extreme is called Antinomianism, which teaches that believers are not subject to any law at all. Most Antinomians use verses that teach that the believer is no longer subject to the Law of Moses, which is true. However, believers are still subject to a law, and that is the Law of the Messiah. The second extreme is Legalism. Legalism is adding man made laws to the laws that God has given and making these man made laws mandatory as well. Both Antinomianism and Legalism are wrong. The balance is that the believer must obey the rules of God that are applicable to him in this Age.

C. Types of Law

1. Elemental Law

The first major type or category of law is elemental law. Elemental law means law that is wrought into the elements, substances, and forces of rational and irrational creatures. When elemental law is wrought into the constitution of the material universe, these elemental laws become physical or natural laws; such as, the law of gravity, the three laws of thermodynamics, and others.

Elemental law that is wrought into the constitution of rational and free beings becomes moral law. All humanity has some sense of morality. Even in the darkest, deepest jungles, people who have never been exposed to the divine law of God or Scripture still have some type of moral code. They still follow a concept of what is right and what is wrong.

There are some other aspects of elemental law. Elemental law is not arbitrary; it springs from nature itself. Elemental law is not temporary; it exists as long as the elements themselves exist, whether they are rational or irrational. Elemental laws can be both negative and positive, demanding conformity to God. Even the pagan has a sense of right and wrong, and he knows when he has not met a certain standard. Elemental law is universal; everywhere man acts as if there were a moral standard. Whether they have the Scripture or not, all men have concepts of right and wrong (Rom. 2:14-15).

2. Positive Enactments

The second type of law is positive enactments. Positive enactments are the expression of God's will in published, written ordinance. This is what is contained in Scripture. There are different expressions of God's will for different ages or dispensations. Nevertheless, every age has a published ordinance from God.

Positive enactments are precepts expressed in three major categories. First, there are moral precepts; such as, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Secondly, there are ceremonial precepts; such as, the sacrificial system of the Law of Moses and the Communion Service of the Law of the Messiah. Thirdly, there are legal precepts, rules that must be followed for what is right and wrong; such as, the dietary laws of the Law of Moses and the rules concerning the proper use of the spiritual gifts in the Law of the Messiah.

D. The Purpose of the Law of God

Five things should be noted in dealing with the purpose of the law of God. First, the law of God was not a means of salvation. God never gave commandments as a way of earning salvation. The purpose of the law of God, regardless of which law or which dispensation, was

never to be a means of salvation (Rom. 3:20; 8:3; Gal. 3:21).

Secondly, the purpose of the law of God was to intensify man's knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:13, 20; 7:7, 13; I Cor. 15:56; Gal. 3:19).

Thirdly, the purpose of the law of God was to reveal the holiness of God (Rom. 7:12).

Fourthly, while the purpose of the law of God was not a means of salvation, it was to lead man to the means of salvation, which is saving faith (Gal. 3:24).

The fifth purpose of the law of God is to provide the rule of life for the believer. Once a person is saved, some of the questions he might ask are: "How then shall I live?" "What does God expect of the believer?" In other words, "What kind of lifestyle does God want him to conduct?" For the believer in the Old Testament, the rule of life was the Law of Moses. For the believer now, the rule of life is the Law of the Messiah. But regardless of which law it was, the law of the Adamic Covenant, the law of the Abrahamic Covenant, the law of the Mosaic Covenant, the Law of the Messiah in the New Covenant, or the future law of the Millennial System, the law of God was never given to attain salvation. Rather, it was to provide a rule of life for the believer.

E. The Believer and the Law of God

Concerning the believer and the law of God, two simple points should be made. Simple as they are, people are very much confused about these things today and often do not know which law to follow. Sometimes they disobey commandments applicable to them and obey commandments which are not.

The first point is that the believer today is not under the Law of Moses. Gentiles were never under the Law of Moses; the Law of Moses was given only to the Jews. This means that not a single one of the 613 commandments is applicable to the believer today. This is taught in Romans 6:14-15; 7:6; Galatians 5:18; and Hebrews 7:18-19.

The second point concerning the believer and the law of God is that the believer today is under the Law of the Messiah. Just as the Law of Moses contained many commandments, the Law of the Messiah also contains many commandments. Many of the commandments in the Law of the Messiah are the same as those found in the Law of Moses, but many others are different. This is why one should clearly understand that the believer is not under the Law of Moses today; he has no obligation to obey any of the 613 commandments of the Law of Moses. However, the believer today has every obligation to obey all of the commandments of the Law of the Messiah. This is taught in

Romans 8:4; I Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 5:18; and 6:2.

The believer today must be careful not to be so zealous in obeying laws that do not apply to him that he ends up living in a state of disobedience to the laws and commandments which do apply to him. Disobeying a commandment of the Law of the Messiah, either passively or actively, is a sin against God. ☆

NOTES

**IF YOU ENJOYED THIS
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