

## Defining Sin in Today's World

Albert Jones—August 26, 2023

Sin is defined by God's Word as *the transgression of His perfect way*:

- His Laws
- His statutes
- His judgments

Why His and not ours? *Because He made us, and not we Him!* He made us in His image after His likeness, as is described in Gen. 1:26.

As we think about God's definition of why He created us this way, we read this:

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.' And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female" (vs 26-27). *He created us that way!*

Verse 28: "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' *God gave dominion to mankind!*

This is why God created us the way that He did. He gives us the opportunity to choose His way, or that way that mankind as a whole has gone after and followed.

That is the way of sin and the way of death. ***This way of sin is not from God!*** But from Satan, the great deceiver.

Too, often in our society, mankind will look at God's Laws as restrictions or obstacles to living life, to its fullest enjoyment.

Most young and upward professionals today will tell you that they're just wanting to have fun. Indeed, the adage goes something like this, 'We're young, and we just want to have fun and enjoy life.'

Of course, following a set of rules from God would just interfere with their fun as they see it. And of course, they do not want God in their fun. But they follow this creed, if you will, that if it feels good, just do it.

Let's think about it from their point of view for a moment. From the carnal point of view of the world, those of us who preach commandment-keeping and obedience to God's Law, we're just putting a downer on their fun. They feel that

Christians as a whole, Christianity as a whole, has classified fun as a 'class A felony,' punishable by the death penalty.

That is the world's point of view of Law-keeping, that it outlaws the opportunity to have a full life. We point to them to Scriptures like Ezek. 18 where God defines it this way; inspired through the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:4: "Behold, all souls *are* Mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they *are* Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die. **But a man who is righteous** and does that which is lawful and right, and has not eaten on the mountains, nor has lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor has defiled his neighbor's wife, nor has come near a menstruating woman, and has not oppressed any man, *but* has given the debtor's pledge back to him, has robbed none by violence, has given his bread to the hungry and has covered the naked with a garment; he does not lend out at usury, nor has taken any increase, he has withdrawn his hand from iniquity, **has executed true justice between man and man, has walked in My statutes, and has kept My ordinances to deal truly, he is righteous, he shall surely live,** **says the Lord GOD**" (vs 4-9).

*This is the definition as God has defined sin and righteousness!*

In Rom. 6, once again affirming with a New Testament verse, the Apostle Paul further affirms:

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death, **but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

So this is the life that God is calling us to, ***eternal life and His Son Jesus Christ!*** But we see that the eyes of the world are blinded to these Truths. They see God's Word as a book of don'ts and dos. Don't do this, don't do that.

Rom. 1:18—indeed, the consequences of sin has been laid out for us, and God has expressed them through His prophets and through His apostles.

Romans 1:18: "Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness."

There is ample examples in the Scriptures pertaining to this Truth. It has been revealed upon them:

- Sodom and Gomorrah
- the Flood

- those who died on the other side of the Flood

Verse 19: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them; for the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse” (vs 19-20). ***God has called us to know Him!***

Verse 21: “Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, **neither were thankful...**” ***to the fact that they had life through Him or that they are able to be sustained in life by Him!***

“...but they became vain in their own reasonings, and **their foolish hearts were darkened**” (v 21).

***God has cut Himself off from sin!*** The sinner that will not repent cannot access God. So, God reveals Himself, and God has sent His Son to bridge that gap and reconcile mankind to Himself.

I want to clarify something. The question still remains on the table.

- Are God's Laws against good and enjoyable things?
- Is God—especially the God of the Old Testament as many will define Him—mean?
- Is He mean and without love?
- Is He without compassion?
- Is He without mercy?
- Is He without grace toward mankind?
- Is that who God is?

***Not at all!*** The Holy Scripture is clear in defining God for what He is.

In Exodus 34:1: “And the Lord said to Moses...”

This is the example of the section that reveals the exchange between Moses and God when Moses had to cut out two tablets of stone to take them back up for God to write the commandments on, because Moses had broken the first set of tablets.

“...“Cut out two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. And I will write upon the tablets the words that were in the first tablets, which you broke. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. And no man shall come up with you, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mountain. Also do not let the flocks nor herds feed before that mountain” (vs 1-3).

Verse 4: “And he cut out two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone. And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD” (vs 4-5).

Verse 6: “And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,** but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation” (vs 6-7).

Yes, ***sin has consequences!*** And we need to understand Who it is that we're sinning against. ***All sin is against God!***

There are a few Scriptures here in the book of Deuteronomy. God is consistent in giving His instruction to His people.

Deuteronomy 4:1: “And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments, which I teach you, in order to do them... [yes, God reveals His Truth, and He instructs us in it] ...so that you may live and go in and possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers gives *to* you. You shall not add to the word, which I command you; neither shall you take away from it...” (vs 1-2).

***So, you cannot detract from God's Word to make it fit your needs!*** You can't detract from God's commandments and laws ***and change them:***

- so that they make you feel good
- so that you can carry out your own desires
- so that you can carry out your own lusts

***God has made it clear that we are not to take from or add to!***

Verse 3: “Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal Peor. For the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men that followed Baal Peor. And you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive, every one of you, this day. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it. And you shall keep and do *them*, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people” (vs 3-6).

That wisdom, understanding and that entire status is a result of being in the presence of God,

having God in their lives, having access to righteous judgments, statutes, and commandments.

This is a result of a relationship with God. God wants us to have a relationship with Him.

Verse 7: "For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him?"

That is our relationship with God today as a Church, that we have access to the Father, and He is near to us when we call upon Him:

- as we walk in His ways
- as we do His will
- as we fulfill His purpose He has made us for

Verse 8: "And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are so* righteous as all this Law, which I set before you today?"

There is no other book, no other set of edicts in the world that produces the outcome of **God's perfect righteous laws and commandments!**

God tells us in v 9: "Only take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things, which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. But teach them to your children, and your children's children, to remember the day that you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will make them hear My words so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and they may teach their children'" (vs 9-10).

Let's summarize here God's instructions through His commandments is for life, to have access to Him, to have access to life, and not just one generation, ***all generations are to know and understand:***

- His Truth
- His ways
- His laws
- His statutes
- His judgments

God is indeed a God who provides for us what we need to have life.

As any father. God wants it to be well with His creation, with His children, *always!* If you are following God's way, he's according to ***His instructions, and it always will be!***

What many fail to understand is this, the God of the Old Testament is the same One Who:

- existed in the beginning with God
- came in the flesh as Savior of the world
- died for the sin of the world

- was raised from the dead
- now is alive at the right hand of God the Father in heaven

*He sits enthroned as:*

- High Priest
- Advocate
- Propitiation for sin
- our elder Brother

*Heb. 13 defines Him as a consistent God:*

- Who is dependable
- Who cannot lie
- Who changes not

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and today, and forever.." *We have that as an anchor, as a sure hope in Him!*

Rom. 8 defines Him a little bit more here in the New Testament. First of all, He came ***so that we might have life!***

- He brought Light ***so that we could comprehend the things of God***
- He brought *hope*
- He brought access ***to power from on high***

*so that we could be able to do the things that God has called us to do!*

We have wonderful promises and great power extended to us. The love of God is indeed manifested to us in ways that it is hard to even express in words. Yes, *He loves us! He is our Father! He has reconciled us to Himself through Christ!* This relationship that we have with God is a wonderful, beautiful, and loving thing, which originated with God and is now being enjoyed and manifested within his creation.

- What is our standing today?
- What is our relationship with God today?
- How is it more powerful than it was even as the instructions that were given to Israel at Mount Sinai?

More powerful in that the relationship is one that is direct ***between us and the Father through Christ!*** We have access in ways that mankind has never had access before.

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit."

We have this relationship with God because of the Spirit of God that has been made available to us because of what Christ did for us.

Verse 2: "Because the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death."

We have been reconciled. We have been indeed rescued from *the law of sin and death*. Access to salvation, forgiveness, propitiation for sin is in Christ.

Verse 3: "For what *was* impossible for the Law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit" (vs 3-4).

So, this relationship between us and Christ makes salvation possible. We can overcome. We can conquer sin in the flesh through Christ with the power of God within us. which is the Holy Spirit.

Verse 5: "For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God" (vs 5-8).

You do not belong to God ***if*** you do not have his Spirit dwelling within.

Verse 9: "However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. **But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.** But if Christ *be* within you..." (vs 9-10).

If you have received the Spirit of God through repentance, baptism, laying on of hands, and now are walking anew in Christ, you do not belong to God, does not belong to Him.

Verse 10: "But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you" (vs 10-11).

So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. *No!* We have a way out of that bondage. ***That way has been made possible through Christ!***

- faith in Him
- faith in His words
- faith in His actions
- faith in His office as High Priest

*in propitiation for sin, allows us to access the power and the relationship with God the Father that will make that possible!*

Verse 13: "Because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body... [all those sins; overcoming with God's help] ...you shall live. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.**"

That is the relationship! So fine a relationship that in v 15 it says an amazing thing: "

Verse 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage unto fear, but you have received a spirit of sonship whereby we call out Abba, Father."

That is an expression equal to that of daddy. So, we can call Him Father. As I said, as any father, God wants it to be well with us.

Romans 8:14<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."

*This is a poem of Ethan the Ezrahite:*

Psalm 89:1: "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations, for I have said, 'Your steadfast love shall be built up forever; You shall establish Your faithfulness in the heavens.' 'I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, 'Your seed will I establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.'" Selah" (vs 1-4).

Verse 5: "And the heavens shall praise Your wonders, O LORD, Your faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints, for who in the heavens can be compared with the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the congregation of the saints and to be held in reverence by all who are round about Him. O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty like you O LORD? And Your faithfulness is round about You" (vs 5-8).

God has given us inspiring words to let us know how much he cares for us.

Psalm 100:1: "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God. He has made us, and we are His; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise; give thanks unto Him and bless His name, for the LORD is good; His steadfast love is everlasting; and His faithfulness endures to all generations." (vs 1-5).

Again, remember, ***He's the same yesterday, today, and forever!***

Philippians 1:1<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in

Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with *the* overseers and deacons: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God on every remembrance of you, always making supplication with joy in my every prayer for you all, for your fellowship in the Gospel from *the* first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ” (vs 1-6).

Yes, God is going to continue to do his good work in us. He is not trying to deny us anything.

Colossians 3:1 “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died, and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life... [yes, there is life in Christ] ...is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members, which *are* on earth...” (v 1-5).

He tells us to get rid of things which separate us from God, namely sin:

“...sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience” (vs 5-6).

***This is the warning,*** and then God shows us how to make it right. So, Paul tells us:

Verse 7: “Among whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things. But now you should also put off all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds, and have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him” (vs 7-10)—*as we saw there in Genesis!*

Verse 11: “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all. Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection**” (vs 11-14).

So God is perfecting us in His love, and God has called us to be His sons and daughters and His Kingdom. *Let's continue to walk:*

- in truth
- in obedience
- in the righteousness that is in Christ
- in the way that is of God

Let's reject any and all notions from Satan the devil in this world that God is acceptable of sin.

***Let's repent of any and all sin in the name of Jesus Christ, who is our propitiation for sin, and let us walk in righteousness with God!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 1:26-28
- 2) Ezekiel 18:4-9
- 3) Romans 6:23
- 4) Romans 1:18-21
- 5) Exodus 34:1-7
- 6) Deuteronomy 4:1-10
- 7) Hebrews 13:8
- 8) Romans 8:1-11, 13-15, 14
- 9) Psalm 89:1-8
- 10) Psalm 100:1-5
- 11) Philippians 1:1-6
- 12) Colossians 3:1-14

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