

SIN - ITS
ORIGIN AND
REMEDY

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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SIN - ITS ORIGIN AND REMEDY

MAN'S SEPARATION FROM GOD

Mankind's original spiritual father was God. Adam, however, as man's federal head, sinned against God, thereby transferring mankind's spiritual parentage, in a legal sense, to Satan. This caused spiritual death to come upon all mankind, resulting in mankind's separation from God. Therefore every baby born into this world, being a child of Adam, is cursed because of the Fall with spiritual death. In order to become a son of God (Galatians 3:26), each child of Adam must be "born again."

ROMANS 5:12 *Wherefore, as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death (separation from God) passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*

The sin that caused death was one of disobedience. Adam took from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil after God had forbidden him to do so, as Genesis 2:17 states:

GENESIS 2:17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die (spiritually).*

So through this one man's sin, spiritual death entered the human race and would reign in all Adam's descendants. As we have learned in previous studies, however, God in His love and mercy sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden before they could eat of the Tree of Life. This prevented them from becoming irrevocably separated from God (Genesis 3:22-24).

“ . . . Mankind’s original spiritual father was God. Adam, however, as man’s federal head, sinned against God, thereby transferring mankind’s spiritual parentage, in a legal sense, to Satan. . . ”

It is interesting to note that originally Adam was a perfect human being, not subject to ageing, sickness or death. He would not have died, physically or spiritually, if he had not allowed sin to enter and gain dominion. Adam, before he sinned, had the potential to live forever as a perfect human being.

Through an act of his own will, however, he disobeyed God, causing his body and all his seed (children) to become mortal (subject to death). In doing so, he allowed Satan to become his master, thereby polluting himself not only spiritually, but also physically, with the presence of death. So by his act of rebellion, Adam not only died spiritually, but also as a consequence, incurred the penalty of death to his physical body. The Word tells us that Adam died at the age of 930 years (Genesis 5:5).

The greatest consequence of Adam’s sin, however, was that when he stepped out of God’s presence and entered into a place of spiritual darkness, he took the whole human race, as yet unborn, with him. All in this position are devoid of God’s indwelling presence, and this thwarts any opportunity for them to have spiritual life and an eternal relationship with their Creator by their own efforts.

HOW WAS SIN (DEATH) PASSED ON TO ALL MANKIND ?

Let’s look at the Book of Romans:

ROMANS 5:12 Wherefore, as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (are born separated from God):

ROMANS 3:23 For all have sinned (all are born in a state of sin, also called spiritual death - and therefore are sinners), and fall short of the glory of God (are deprived of God's saving presence);

These scriptures are telling us that the consequence of Adam's sin was passed on to all mankind. This consequence was death, both spiritual and natural. It meant that all were subsequently born under the curse that Adam, as man's federal head, brought not only upon himself but to all his offspring.

Man can never elevate himself from this condition and position of spiritual death. Originally born to live in his physical body forever, man is now born to die. Genetically our blood now carries the curse that results in death, and this curse of death remains in our blood even after we have been born again. While our spirit-man is delivered from the curse through redemption, thus giving us eternal life, this blessing does not extend to our flesh. This means that while our body of flesh will die, our cleansed and regenerated spirit will live forever with God. Amen.

It is evident that a person in darkness was conceived and birthed in that state of darkness. It is therefore not our personal sin that has caused us to be born in spiritual darkness, for we were conceived in that darkness (Psalms 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9). This simply means that we were born without God's presence within us.

Man, by his deeds, however, will prove during his lifetime that he will also sin against God's standards, thus proving he is a sinner by nature (Mark 7:20-23).

“ . . .The greatest consequence of Adam's sin, however, was that when he stepped out of God's presence and entered into a place of spiritual darkness, he took the whole human race, as yet unborn, with him. . .”

THE ONE SIN OF ADAM

The significance of Adam's sin lay not so much in the sin itself but in what his sin caused, which was separation from God's kingdom. This is because through his act of disobedience, Adam stepped out of and away from God's Lordship in his life. Essentially therefore he was saying, "I don't want You to be my Lord. I want to be my own lord and exercise self-rule in my own life". As a result of this decision and its horrific consequences, Adam severed his intimate spiritual tie with God, and entered into eternal spiritual darkness.

Through his rebellion he stepped outside of God's manifested presence that had given him an enriched spiritual life. His foundation, and that of all his descendants, was then changed. Instead of having the light of God within, he was lowered into a state of spiritual darkness, devoid of the indwelling light of God. Man was then never able to raise himself from this diminished and degenerated position, for it is beyond man's power to rise, by his own efforts, to a higher spiritual state.

That which was at the root of this spiritual corruption could only be dealt with through judgement, namely at the Cross of Calvary, where an unthinkable price was paid to redeem mankind from the state and condition of sin.

The curse of death or sin was therefore passed down through the genetic bloodline, for the life (or death) is in the blood, as Deuteronomy 12:23 tells us:

DEUTERONOMY 12:23 *Only be sure that you eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and you may not eat the life with the flesh.*

LEVITICUS 17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood...*

Before the Fall, Adam's blood was sinless. After Adam sinned, however, his blood became polluted, in the sense that there was no light or life of God in it. Because Adam was the federal head of mankind, the result of his sin of disobedience was then passed down to all his offspring through the bloodline. This result was that both

spiritual and natural death came upon all mankind. For this reason, we, as Adam's descendants, are all born into a state of sin - for the life, or conversely death, is in the blood. This consequence resulted from Adam's sin, for "*as through one man sin entered into the world.*" (Romans 5:12).

Adam fell in the Garden of Eden. From this point he was then living on a plane of existence that meant he was dead spiritually and thus separated from God's manifested presence in his spirit, the presence that brings connection and relationship. It also meant that Adam would now age and die physically. Today death continues to prove that we in the flesh are still under the curse.

From that plane then all are born to die physically, and from the beginning of life, to be separated spiritually from God. From this plane there was also no way back to the original plane of existence that gave great blessing through relationship with God and the indwelling of His presence.

“. . . In doing so, he allowed Satan to become his master, thereby polluting himself not only spiritually, but also physically, with the presence of death. . .”

Jesus' Blood Was Sinless

We have learned that the life or death is in the blood, and that mankind inherited Adam's fallen nature through the polluted Adamic bloodline. Because we are all, of necessity, descendants of Adam, we are also all partakers of the curse of original sin (the state of sin).

The scriptures declare, however, that Jesus, born of Mary, was sinless.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He (God) has made Him (Jesus) to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

1 JOHN 3:5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

How could this be so?

The Catholic Church in attempting to answer this intriguing question has long postulated that Mary was sinless. This belief is clearly refuted by the Word of God which declares that “. . . *There is none righteous, no not one*” (Romans 3:10), “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23).

Jesus was not born without sin because of His mother’s sinless state - this view is simply without any scriptural credibility.

Joseph was not Jesus’ father, for Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

ISAIAH 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

MATTHEW 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused (engaged) to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example (expose her to public disgrace), was minded to put her away privily (to break the engagement quietly).

MATTHEW 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto yourself Mary as your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Note: Some Christians take the view that Jesus was born without the curse of original sin because He was conceived fully by the Holy Spirit. In other words, just as Joseph’s sperm was not involved, neither was Mary’s egg. Conception was brought about completely

by the Holy Spirit, and Mary's womb served as an incubator or "house" in which baby Jesus developed for nine months. In regard to this belief, Mary was then in the position of a surrogate mother rather than a natural one because her egg was not a part of the process.

So God was Jesus' father and Jesus did not inherit the stain of original sin. In addition to this, for the whole time Jesus was here on earth, He walked as a perfect man Who committed no sin. Indeed the Word of God tells us that Jesus never sinned once in all that He did.

HEBREWS 4:15 For we have not an High Priest Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Thus Jesus neither inherited sin nor committed sin during His whole lifetime here on earth. This was of vital importance in regard to the acceptance of His Blood as the ransom payment for mankind.

HEBREWS 1:9 You (Jesus the man) have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity (wickedness); therefore God, even Your God (Your Father), has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows (has put You above all).

1 PETER 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile (deceit, hypocrisy) found in His mouth:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He has made Him to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

So because of the Divine circumstances of Jesus' conception, Jesus' Blood remained unpolluted by sin and He alone of all people born into the world was not born into a state of spiritual death. He alone did not inherit the fallen nature of Adam.

As we know, however, all Adam's progeny inherited the same polluted blood and with this, the spiritual position which God calls "death."

THE IMPUTATION OF ADAM'S SIN

What is imputed sin?

“In the Garden of Eden, when Adam sinned by eating fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that act of disobedience produced a grave, two-fold effect on the rest of humanity. The first effect was original sin and the second was imputed sin.

Adam, as the head of the human race, caused every person after him to be born into a fallen condition or sinful state. This effect of Adam’s sin is known as original sin and is often referred to as inherited sin. All human beings have inherited a sinful nature through Adam’s original act of disobedience (Romans 5:12–14).

In addition to receiving a fallen nature, all people who came after Adam have been credited with the guilt of Adam’s sin (Romans 5:18). That is the meaning of imputed sin. An imputation is an attribution or a crediting of something. Imputed sin is Adam’s guilt attributed to or credited to us. All humans are counted as having sinned in Adam and thus deserving the same punishment for sin as Adam. Imputed sin affects our standing before God (we are guilty, condemned), whereas original sin affects our character (we are morally ruined). Both original and imputed sin make us subject to God’s judgment.

“. . .Both original and imputed sin make us subject to God’s judgment. . .”

*The term impute is used both legally and financially and means “to designate any action, word, or thing as credited to another person’s account.” Biblically, Adam’s sin was imputed to all his descendants, and they are to be dealt with as guilty. **It does not mean they are personally guilty of Adam’s sin, only that his sin was credited to their account.** and thus every person participates in the guilt and penalty of that original transgression.*

The penalty for sin is death. We are subject to spiritual death, or separation from God in this present life, due to imputed sin: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath” (Ephesians 2:1–3). If we persist in this state of separation from God, the result is the second death, which is eternal (Revelation 20:11–15).

Physical death is also a penalty for imputed sin: *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). The guilt of Adam’s sin was directly charged or imputed to the whole human family so that all people are now subject to death (Romans 6:23).*

The apostle Paul teaches imputed sin in various passages: “The many died by the trespass of the one man,” “One trespass resulted in condemnation for all people,” “Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners” (Romans 5:15, 18, 19), and “In Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The good news regarding original and imputed sin is that God already had a remedy, a sovereign plan of salvation, even before Adam sinned in the Garden.

*The remedy for imputed sin is the atoning work of Jesus Christ: “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). The moment a sinner believes in Jesus and accepts His gift of salvation, the righteousness of Christ is credited to his or her account: “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). **Believers possess imputed righteousness.***

“. . .The good news regarding original and imputed sin is that God already had a remedy, a sovereign plan of salvation, even before Adam sinned in the Garden. . .”

*As all people are in Adam, so all believers are in Christ. Being in Christ means that His righteousness is now ours. Through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, **the sin of humanity was imputed to Christ. Jesus took on Himself the penalty for our sin:** “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25).*

Believers are not yet perfected in righteousness. Nonetheless, they are clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus answered the demands of justice for our sin and satisfied the requirements of the Law (Romans 3:25–26; Colossians 2:14).¹

The doctrine of the imputation

The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin means that when Adam first sinned, that sin (and its blame) was rightly regarded by God to be our sin as well. John Piper writes:

The problem with the human race is not most deeply that everybody does various kinds of sins— those sins are real, they are huge and they are enough to condemn us. Paul is very concerned about them. But the deepest problem is that behind all our depravity and all our guilt and all our sinning, there is a deep mysterious connection with Adam whose sin became our sin and whose judgment became our judgment. (John Piper, "Adam, Christ, and Justification: Part 1") God ordains that that there be a union of some kind that makes Adam's sin to be our sin so that our condemnation is just. ("Adam, Christ, and Justification: Part 5") The biblical basis for this doctrine of imputed sin is discussed thoroughly in John Piper's five sermons on Romans 5:12-21. Here we will

simply seek to summarize some of the primary evidence from this text.

“. . .But the deepest problem is that behind all our depravity and all our guilt and all our sinning, there is a deep mysterious connection with Adam whose sin became our sin and whose judgment became our judgment. . .”

Sin Entered the World Through One Man

First, Paul states in 5:12 that all sinned in Adam: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Paul seems to be equating the "because all sinned" with "through one man sin entered into the world."

Sin is Not Imputed Where There is no Law

Second, in verses 13-14 Paul adds a clarification which confirms that he does indeed have the imputation of Adam's sin in view in the phrase ***"because all sinned" rather than our individual sins.*** He states: "For until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." In other words, Paul concedes that personal sin was prevalent in the world before Moses ("until the Law sin was in the world..."). But he adds that these personal sins were not the ultimate reason people died in that time period: "But sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses." As Piper summarizes: People died even though their own individual sins against the Mosaic law were not the reason for dying; they weren't counted. Instead, ***the reason all died is because all sinned in Adam. Adam's sin was imputed to them.*** (John Piper, "Adam, Christ, and Justification: Part 2")

Death Reigns Even Over Those Who Did Not Sin Like Adam

Third, Paul's statement at the end of verse 14 further clarifies that he does not have personal sins in view as the reason for human death: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam." Piper notes: In other words, yes Paul concedes that there are other kinds of laws before the Mosaic Law, and yes people broke those laws, and yes, one could argue that these sins are the root cause of death and condemnation in the world. But, Paul says, there is a problem with that view, because death reigned "even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam." There are those who died without seeing a law and choosing to sin against it. Who are they? I think the group of people begging for an explanation is infants. Infants died. They could not understand personal revelation. They could not read the law on their hearts and choose to obey or disobey it. Yet they died. Why? Paul answers: the sin of Adam and the imputation of that sin to the human race. In other words, death reigned over all humans, even over those who did not sin against a known and understood law. Therefore, the conclusion is, to use the words of verse 18: "through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men."

*So the purpose of verses 13 and 14 are to clarify verse 12 in this way: At the end of verse 12 the words, "death spread to all men, because all sinned" mean that **"death spread to all because all sinned in Adam."** Death is not first and most deeply because of our own individual sinning, but because of what happened in Adam. (Ibid)*

Paul's Emphasis Upon the One Transgression

Fourth, at least five times in the following verses Paul says that death comes upon all humans because of the one sin of Adam:

Verse 15: by the transgression of the one the many died

Verse 16: the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation

Verse 17: by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one

Verse 18: through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men

We are all condemned not ultimately because of our individual sins, but because of one sin (verse 18). We die not ultimately because of personal sins, but because of Adam's one transgression (verse 17). It is not ultimately from our personal sins that we die, but rather "by the transgression of the one the many died." Paul states over and over again that it is because of one sin that death and condemnation belong to us all. In other words, we are connected to Adam such that his one sin is regarded as our sin and we are worthy of condemnation for it.

“. . .Justification does not concern a change in our characters, the infusion of something inherent in us. Rather, it involves a change in our standing before God. . .“

The Direct Statement of Verse 19

*Fifth, verse 19 provides us with a direct statement of imputation: For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. Paul here says that we are made sinners by the sin of Adam. Due to his disobedience, we are regarded as sinners. We cannot take "made sinners" here to be referring to original sin in which we become inherently sinful because it is paralleled with "made righteous." The phrase "made righteous" in this context is referring to the great truth of justification. **Justification does not concern a change in our characters, the infusion of something inherent in us. Rather, it involves a change in our standing before God.** In justification, God declares us righteous because He imputes to us the righteousness of Christ--not because He makes us internally righteous (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus, when Paul says "**made righteous**" here, he means "**imputed with righteousness**" not "**infused with righteousness.**" Since "made sinners" is paralleled with "made righteous," it must also be referring to imputation. Thus, Paul is saying that we are all made sinners in the sense that we are imputed with Adam's sin.²*

THE PENALTY OF SIN IS DEATH

Background Reading: James 1:14-15

A major physical result of Adam's sin was that his body was eventually overtaken by physical death.

Originally man sinned and therefore man must die. Not only is man born into a state of sin, he possesses a sin nature and he sins. He is therefore a sinner by birth and through his actions. Death was the judgement for sin since “. . . *the wages of sin is death . . .*” (Romans 6:23). Death therefore is the great leveller, the inevitable outcome of each person's life. In this age, none, Saint or sinner, rich or poor, can escape the final and ultimate conclusion that they must one day die. Death then becomes the evidence that silences every attempt to transfer man's guilt, even partially, to Satan or anyone else. Death is the proof and confirmation of sin.

ROMANS 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's examine the meaning of the word “*death*” in this scripture. Whenever the Lord is speaking of death in this context, He is not only referring to physical death, He is also speaking of spiritual death.

“. . . Not only is man born into a state of sin, he possesses a sin nature and he sins. He is therefore a sinner by birth and through his actions. . . ”

In the beginning Adam had perfect communication with God. It was not long before he lost this, through sinning, because “*the wages of sin is death*” (separation from God). As we have learned, through Adam's sin, death also entered his physical body as well. It was then passed on to all his offspring, which is everyone who has ever been born into this world.

God did not create man to die, but to live forever in a perfect body. Through sin, God's creation became marred and subject to

death. This was never God's intention - but His plan of redemption was the way of escape, the way to restore to man what he had lost, both spiritually and physically. The new birth restores man to spiritual life. With the Rapture, redeemed man will also regain that which he lost physically - and more - for the glorified body is far superior to the perfect body which Adam and Eve possessed.

SIN SEPARATES

God has shown us in His Word that if there is sin in man's spirit, He cannot bless him or fellowship with him in the way He desires.

***ISAIAH 59:2** But your iniquities have separated (caused separation) between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.*

***ROMANS 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

***ROMANS 6:23** For the wages of sin is death (separation from God); but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

“. . .Death then becomes the evidence that silences every attempt to transfer man's guilt, even partially, to Satan or anyone else. Death is the proof and confirmation of sin. . .”

The literal meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words variously translated as “sin” and “sinner” describe the true nature of sin in its many forms. Sin is:

1. Transgression: this word signifies willful deviation from, and therefore rebellion against, God's laws (Psalm 51:1; Hosea 7:13).

2. Iniquity: signifies an offence, whether intentional or not, against God's laws (Romans 1:21-23).

3. Missing the mark: a failure to meet the Divine standard and so not share in the prize, can also be defined simply as sin (Romans 3:23).

4. Trespass: an unfaithful treacherous act (2 Chronicles 26:18).

5. Lawlessness or spiritual anarchy: a total disregard for God's laws (1 Timothy 1:9).

6. Unbelief: or an insult to God's credibility, is also rendered as disobedience (Hebrews 3:12,19).

Sin originated with Satan, entered the world through Adam and became universal, resulting in spiritual death for all mankind.

Briefly, sin can be an action (deed, word or thought) or a state (position). We are born into a state of sin because we are descendants of Adam. And we commit actions of sin when we violate God's commandments and laws.

So sin can be referenced to:

1. The state of sin into which we are all born (separation from God, also called "spiritual death"). Another term used in this context is "original sin."

2. Actions (deeds, thoughts etc.) which violate God's Word and commands, and are thus acts of unfaithfulness to our commitment to Jesus.

3. The sin nature which empowers us to commit the sin we have willed to do.

After sin entered mankind, God could not have anything to do with man in a deep spiritual sense. God wanted to be close to man as

He had been originally, but He could not, because God cannot fellowship, in a true sense, with a person who is in a state of sin. Our spirit must be without sin before God can receive us into His Kingdom and therefore His presence. This can only happen as we receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and become clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Spiritually speaking, therefore, death is darkness and life is light. Life comes from God for God is Light, and those who have life have the Light of God in and around their spirit-man (1 John 5:12).

“. . .Sin originated with Satan, entered the world through Adam and became universal, resulting in spiritual death for all mankind. . .”

Most basically defined, sin is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. Sin is not only doing that which is wrong, in thought, word or deed, sin is also not doing that which is right, morally and spiritually. This means that there are sins of commission - wrongdoing - and sins of omission - not doing right. Without God in your life, positionally and experientially, you will sin. Only through Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can we avoid sin and walk in righteousness. God's will shows us the path of righteousness in which no sin lies. However we must seek, find and embrace His will for in it alone does His grace become available to us.

Sin blocks His grace from being imparted. When we, as Christians, want the darkness of sin, we frustrate His grace from being imparted to us (Galatians 2:21). When Christians sin without repentance, they invite darkness of some degree or measure into their lives. This darkness becomes an obstacle to fellowship with God, even though their relationship with Him continues. As stated, sin will frustrate the grace of God, for He cannot give Divine enablement when His children desire to hold onto the sin and darkness they are in. For the unsaved, the wage of sin is death (spiritual death). For the saved, the wage of sin is darkness (and bondage).

As we have said, sin is anything that does not conform to the character and nature of God. This means we need the grace of the Divine Nature to energize our human nature so that we do not sin - for no one can conform to God's righteous standard without His help. We need God in us, energizing us as we flow in the Holy Spirit.

Any sin we commit must be put under the Blood of Calvary through repentance so that God can forgive and cleanse us. Repentance allows heaven's graces to be imparted so that our sin can be dealt with. What gives God the legal right to forgive and cleanse us, so that the sin is never again to be held to our account, is the finished work of the Cross - the Atonement. The penalty for our sin has been paid. Not only this but God has made us partakers of His Divine Nature so we can both will and do of His good pleasure - so we can live righteously. We can never do this in our own strength. If good works are done in our own strength, according to our own leading, this is flesh and so is sin - because we could and would claim the glory for such works (Galatians 5:17). We are to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit in all we do (Romans 8:1; Galatians 2:20). As the scriptures tell us:

ROMANS 14:23 . . . whatever does not originate and proceed from faith (the union of belief and trust - the Divine Nature is thus involved here) is sin - that is, whatever is done without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful. (Amp.)

Rossier speaks of this verse as follows:

“Paul encouraged new converts by bringing up another crucial principle - any action is sin if it does not stem from faith. In other words, a person's conscience feels “condemned” (kekritai) if the action does not arise out “of faith” (ek pisteos). If a person experiences a hesitation and yet acts in spite of that hesitation, then a sense of condemnation exists. Therefore, even though other people may do something, if you do not feel comfortable with it yourself, do not do it!”³

In all the major decisions we make in life, we should seek the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. As Dake says, “*Any thing done to violate the faith principle by which one is saved, and*

by which he lives (Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38), is sin. One must know beyond all doubt or hesitation in his mind that what he allows is in perfect accord with the Word of God before he acts.”⁴

“ . . . Sin is not only doing that which is wrong, in thought, word or deed, sin is also not doing that which is right, morally and spiritually. . . ”

Thus we must choose light rather than darkness - day by day, minute by minute, so that although we are in the Light, we will walk experientially in righteousness (light) rather than the unrighteousness of the flesh (darkness). As the Word tells us:

1 JOHN 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

All this takes place as the grace of God is imparted to us in an experiential sense.

Positionally, however, when a sinner physically dies, their grace period of physical life comes to an end. They will then face the same judgement as their father Satan - eternal death. Each person is therefore given the period of their own lifetime in which to repent and receive Jesus as Lord. This is the message of the Gospel - as we have said, there is no “second chance” beyond the grave (Hebrews 9:27).

REDEMPTION THROUGH IMPUTATION

Background Reading: Romans Chapter 4

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He has made Him to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

We know that Jesus’ Blood was sinless, and He was “*without blemish and without spot*” (1 Pete 1:19) and so a perfect offering. As

we have indicated, the statement in the above verse (2 Corinthians 5:21) "He has made Him to be sin for us" means that Christ bore our punishment, not our sin. The Greek word for "sin" in this verse can also be translated as "sin offering" or a "sacrifice for sin."

One writer comments further in regard to this issue:

"The phrase, "Who knew so sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21), refers to the fact and graphically so, that He was not guilty. He was perfectly pure. This idea is thus expressed by Peter when he wrote, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). As well, Hebrews 7:26 says, "He was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners'." In all respects, in every way, and in all conceivable senses, the Lord Jesus was pure and holy. If He had not been, He would not have been qualified to make an Atonement. Hence, the Sacred writers are everywhere at great pains to keep this idea prominent, for on this depends the whole superstructure of the Plan of Salvation.

The phrase, "knew no sin," is an expression of great beauty and dignity. It indicates His entire and perfect purity. He was altogether unacquainted with sin; He was a stranger to transgressions; He was conscious of no sin, He committed none. He had a mind and heart perfectly free from pollution, and His entire life was perfectly pure and holy in the Sight of God."⁵

(underlines added)

Scripture thus attests to the fact of Christ's sinlessness. He became eligible, through His sinlessness and His worth as the acceptable sacrifice, to become the Lamb of God, Who would pay the penalty for the sins of the whole of mankind (John 1:29). Through identification and substitution, Christ took our place, before a just and loving God, at Calvary, the altar of sacrifice.

Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity, but through the Incarnation of God becoming man. As the sin offering, Christ bore the weight of the wrath of God's judgement upon mankind's sin, and it was the shedding of His precious Blood which paid the price for our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19). This was Christ's work upon the Cross, and this is what He accomplished - the payment of the ransom price. Now the sinner need only look to the Cross for the message of salvation, finding their answer to the greatest of life's questions in

the substitutionary death of Christ on their behalf, and the shedding of His precious Blood (Romans 5:8; Colossians 1:14).

This is the basis of the Gospel message, and will always be the foundation stone of the Christian faith. There is no other means of redemption, for the price was paid at Calvary when the sinless Blood of Christ our Passover Lamb was shed for the sin of the whole world (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“ . . . Through identification and substitution, Christ took our place, before a just and loving God, at Calvary, the altar of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us by His Deity, but through the Incarnation of God becoming man. . . ”

Jesus became the substitute in our place by identifying with us. As a result, He, though sinless, had to be treated as though He were sin. Without this substitution, Christ taking our place, and we identifying with Him, there could be no salvation. Christ identified with mankind’s sin regarding its penalty, and man identifies with Christ’s righteousness through faith.

It has been said that *“our sins were the judicial ground of the sufferings of Christ, so that those sufferings were a satisfaction of justice; and His righteousness is the judicial ground of our acceptance with God, so that our pardon is an act of justice. This is a justification, or a declaration that justice is satisfied.”*⁶

(underlines added)

Greek scholar Dr Bernard Rossier also writes in regard to this important verse in Corinthians:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He has made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

*“The monumental privilege and responsibility of being ambassadors rests on our shoulders precisely because God **“made”** (epoiesen) him **“sin”** (hamartian) **“for us”** (huper hemon). People have all kinds of ideas about what this concise but cogent statement means. In order to understand it scripturally, we must **first** look at the qualifier that begins the sentence and therefore occupies the position of most emphasis.*

*“The one not knowing sin” (ton me gnonta hamartion) begins the verse in the original Greek and it governs the remainder of the verse. Christ was completely conscious of His own absolute sinlessness (John 8:46). He had no personal acquaintance with sin. This applies to the fact that He was born without a sinful nature (Matthew 1:18), and to the fact that He never committed one single act of sin (Hebrews 4:15). He came as “the last Adam” (I Corinthians 15:45), and Adam was not created with a sinful nature; therefore, Christ came on the same basis that Adam did. The difference lies in the indubitable fact that Adam sinned by disobeying God, but Jesus never disobeyed God in any way whatsoever. Hence, the statement **“He made him to be sin”** must refer to the imputation of our sins to the sinless sacrifice. The one who knew no sin was treated as sin for us.*

“. . . Our sins were the judicial ground of the sufferings of Christ, so that those sufferings were a satisfaction of justice; and His righteousness is the judicial ground of our acceptance with God, so that our pardon is an act of justice. . .”

In another contrast, Paul said that Christ became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). He vicariously suffered the consequences of our sin (Isaiah 53). This extends even to the ultimate separation of a soul from the presence of God (Mark 15:34). God had to forsake Him in order for the supreme price to be paid. Without that payment, all of us would face eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

*Because Christ's sacrifice was an infinite one, there is no way we can possibly fathom all that He suffered by having our sins imputed to Him. He did all this, though, "in order that we might become [the] righteousness of God in him" (hina hemeis gend - metha diakaiosune theou en auto). In other words, our sins were imputed to Him so His righteousness would be imputed to us. Thank God for His grace!"*⁷ (underlines added)

In relation to the imputation of our sins to Christ, let us also examine the use of what was termed the "scapegoat" in Old Testament ceremonial practice. Jesus became our "scapegoat," for the physical type-pattern was borne out in Him in a spiritual sense at Calvary.

The word "scapegoat" comes from the scriptures (Leviticus 16:7-10; 20-22), where we are told of two goats which were to be used on behalf of the people and their sin on the Day of Atonement. The two goats combined constituted one sin offering. For this reason they were to be presented to the Lord together, as one offering, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

One goat was to be sacrificed "for the Lord," and typified Christ's death at Calvary. The other, the scapegoat, was to be sent away into the wilderness, being called the "goat of departure." This took place after the High Priest laid hands on the head of the scapegoat, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, and imputing them to this goat. This was to symbolize the imputation of our sin to Christ on the cross, the scapegoat therefore typifying our sins being imputed to Christ and thus removed. Two goats were needed to provide a proper type-pattern of the great Atonement at Calvary - to which all of this pointed, and which it all symbolized. Both were needed to demonstrate what Calvary accomplished for mankind, for one goat could not typify all. "The goat that died typified the death of Christ which addressed the root cause of sin; the scapegoat (the other goat) represented all acts of sin removed and taken away" (Leviticus 16:9) (E.S.B.)

LEVITICUS 16:20 And when he (Aaron, the High Priest) has made an end of reconciling the Holy Place, and the Tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

LEVITICUS 16:21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them (signifying imputation) upon the head of the goat, and shall send him (the goat) away by the hand of a fit man (the man who had been appointed to do the job) into the wilderness:

“ . . . Two goats were needed to provide a proper type-pattern of the great Atonement at Calvary - the goat that died typified the death of Christ which addressed the root cause of sin; the scapegoat represented all acts of sin removed and taken away. . . ”

The blood of the first goat was shed, pointing to Calvary and to Jesus, the One who died on the Cross for us. The second goat being taken into the wilderness and left there represented the sin of the people being imputed to him and then cast into the sea of God's forgetfulness. This was a visible sign to the people that their sins had been dealt with.

PSALM 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

MICAH 7:19 . . . You (oh God) will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Jesus' sacrifice provided all this for us in a true spiritual sense as He fulfilled spiritually that which both goats typified. Firstly our sins were imputed to Him, the sinless One. Then He laid down His life as the sacrifice for these sins, shedding His Blood and paying the ultimate price of death. Now our sins, as we repent of them, are washed away by Jesus' Blood, never to be remembered. Amen.

Jesus fulfilled in a complete sense all the type-patterns in the Old Testament which pointed to Calvary. These type-patterns were, according to God's foreknowledge, a result of Calvary, even though they were forerunners. He came, as He said, not "to destroy (the Law and the Prophets) *but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17-18).

Jesus was never anything other than holy and pure, even on the Cross. He never became blackened by our sin. Rather our sin was imputed (or legally attributed) to Him, and He became our representative in order that we might become "*the righteousness of God in Him.*" Jesus became, in another sense, "*a curse for us*" (Galatians 3:13). Our sin was therefore imputed to Him so that His righteousness could be imputed to us. We become justified, as though we had never sinned, because He became "a sin offering" for us, being treated as though He was a sinner. Both positions are legal positions, for Jesus never experienced sin or entered into an actual state of sin. He was "clothed" with our sin so we could be "clothed" with His righteousness. This is the basis of the great exchange which took place at Calvary.

The one difference which exists in this analogy is that when Jesus was "clothed" with our sin, He was not tainted in any way by it. We, however, received the cleansing of our spirit by His Blood when we were "clothed" with His righteousness.

“. . . Jesus was never anything other than holy and pure, even on the Cross. He never became blackened by our sin. Rather our sin was imputed (or legally attributed) to Him. . .”

In order for Christ to become our sin offering, and the sin of the world to be imputed to Him as our sinless substitute, Jesus had to be forsaken by the Father and the Holy Spirit - for God cannot associate with sin (or even, it appears, the Sin Bearer when He bore the punishment of the sin of the world). We witness the withdrawal of the Father and the Holy Spirit from Jesus in His agonized words, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Mark 15:34). These same Words had been prophesied centuries before, along with

other obvious references to the crucifixion, and are found in Psalm 22. At this point Jesus the man was forsaken by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit for the first time in His life. They had to abandon Him for the ultimate price to be paid.

Jesus' spirit, however, was not polluted with sin at this time, as the spirit of unregenerate man is polluted with sin. Therefore He did not need to be born again, for Jesus was righteous before the Cross, on the Cross and after the Cross.

Jesus willingly laid His life down for the purpose of death (John 10:17-18). He then died of a ruptured heart, and in this way His precious Blood was shed, causing His physical death. He died, however, not an unregenerate sinner but a righteous man, the holy Lamb of God.

In the study of Biblical theology, the doctrine of spiritual imputation shows that sin or righteousness can be imputed or charged to another's account in a legal sense. Applying this doctrine to Jesus and His sacrifice as the sin offering, we find that He did not have to become sin, but remained sinless in order to bear the punishment for our guilt which was imputed to Him. In other words, Jesus did not bear the wickedness and filth of our sinful nature, but He did bear the terrible punishment that should have been poured out upon us. Therefore, although innocent, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, the penalty that we ourselves should have suffered, namely death. However if man does pay this penalty for his own sin, then eternal separation from the Father, ultimately in the Lake of Fire, will result - for man, of and by himself, has nothing else with which to satisfy justice.

“. . . In the study of Biblical theology, the doctrine of spiritual imputation shows that sin or righteousness can be imputed or charged to another's account in a legal sense. . . .”

Our punishment was dealt out to Him. Our sins, in regard to moral character, are our own. They are not imputed to us, and only in a legal sense could they become someone else's. However, Jesus

Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice could take upon Himself the punishment for our sins. We are speaking here of legal liabilities which Christ assumed on our behalf, not the transfer of actual transgressions.

So the transfer of our sins to Jesus Christ was not a transfer of actual transgressions. This did not occur and could not occur, even though Christ made Himself liable to endure the penalty for our sins. To have been anything other than innocent would have violated the Old Testament type (Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 1:18-19) and would have disqualified Him, as far as God was concerned, from becoming an acceptable substitute for us. At all times Jesus was holy, and never at any time did our sin taint His being. If our sin had affected Him in any way, He would have become ineligible to pay the price.

Legally speaking, imputation of sin also allows for imputation of righteousness, that is if the sacrifice involved is righteous, without sin, and deemed worthy to meet the requirements of perfect justice. To be merely without sin would not be enough. Otherwise the Blood of baby Jesus could have paid the price. Testing the value, or verifying the worth of Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice, was necessary. Subjected to every testing, Jesus had faith to begin with and to end with, and never deviated from trusting in God's Word, and obeying the will of the Father. Thus He proved Himself worthy to stand in the gap between God and man, and to bridge the gulf by the giving of His own life.

Therefore the work of Calvary required not only a sinless sacrifice, but a sacrifice which had been tested until its worth was determined and verified. Although Christ was always sinless, His value as the sacrifice had to meet the demands of perfect justice. As a boy, a teenager and a man, He was sinless. But the worth of the sacrifice had to be sufficient to pay the enormous debt of mankind's sin. At the age of thirty three, with around three years ministry behind Him and a lifetime of testing, Jesus confronted the ultimate test - Calvary. In the heat of battle He maintained faith in His Father's Word - in the face of injustice, torture, rejection and the Father's desertion. Here in the final furnace of affliction He was to prove that indeed He was worthy to act as the sacrifice - to become our substitute and to pay the terrible price required.

PSALM 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? (. . . Jesus cried this Word while hanging on the Cross [Matthew 27:46]. This portrayal glorifies Him as the Sin-Offering. It presents a sinless Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, forsaken by God, but only in the sense that God allowed Him to die. Such a fact is unique in history and will never need to be repeated. This sinless Man – Himself God manifest in the flesh – was made to be a Sin-Offering, in effect, the penalty of sin, which, in this case, was physical death [II Corinthians 5:21], and thereby pierced with a sword of Divine Wrath [Zechariah 13:7]. In that judgement, God dealt infinitely with sin, and in so dealing with it in the Person of His Beloved Son, showed His wrath against sin and His love for the sinner. Thus, He vindicated Himself and, as well, redeemed man. God revealed Himself at Calvary as in no other place or way. What the depth of horror was to which the sinless soul of Jesus sank under the Wrath of God as the Sin-Offering is unfathomable for men or angels; therefore, our efforts to explain these sufferings will, of necessity, fall short of that which He really experienced.) (E.S.B.)

“. . .The work of Calvary required not only a sinless sacrifice, but a sacrifice which had been tested until its worth was determined and verified. His value as the sacrifice had to meet the demands of perfect justice. . .”

In summary, as regards to the subject of identification, Christ identified with man when He was born of a virgin, becoming, as He called Himself, the Son of Man. In this way, having no original sin or incumbent sin nature, He became the second Adam. After being tested and proven as a man, and remaining sinless, Jesus was eligible to become man’s substitutionary sacrifice. Hence “*He became sin*”

(the sin offering) in that He identified, in a legal sense, with man's sin by means of that sin being imputed, or legally attributed, to Him. Then He could stand in our place and take, for all of mankind, the punishment for our sin - which was death. When "*the Word became flesh,*" Christ identified with man - and this was a conditional or experiential position. However His substitutionary role in providing for mankind's salvation was a legal position. As far as the Law of God was concerned, once Jesus entered into this legal position, God's punishment was metered out to Him as a man, exactly the same as it would have been for any sinner. Such was the legal substitutionary position into which Christ entered, even though He did not sin. Hence the penalty of death was required. Such was the worth of His sacrifice, however, that through Him, and the shedding of His sinless Blood, all of mankind could be saved. Now all those who identify with Christ through repentance and acceptance of His Lordship are not just positionally saved in their spirit-man. By means of God's grace they are also conditionally saved through God, the Holy Spirit, coming to dwell in the heart of the Believer. Man is thus sanctified and all the darkness into which he was born is replaced by God's saving presence.

Christ conditionally identified with man through the Incarnation. Then He positionally identified with man as the substitutionary sacrifice, so that our sins could be imputed to Him. Because He suffered vicariously on our behalf, man can now positionally and conditionally be identified "in Christ." By this means, God can now legally impute Christ's righteousness to us, and, if we are legally righteous in Christ, then God has also made us conditionally righteous in Christ in our spirit-man. While the costly redemption price has been paid, those who remain outside of Christ remain dead to God, being sinners doomed to the second death - the Lake of Fire. The price has been paid but the individual must accept this price and its significance for them personally.

“. . . Christ conditionally identified with man through the Incarnation. Then He positionally identified with man as the substitutionary sacrifice, so that our sins could be imputed to Him. . . ”

While all Believers are conditionally sanctified in their spirit-man, which is cleansed from all sin, the outward man also continues to need renewal day by day. In other words, so that ongoing transformation can take place, our minds need the grace of God's Word on a daily basis. Change then takes place by God's grace, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and human effort. This is a joint effort as man yields to God and cooperates with Him, so receiving the grace needed to change. As Christians we should be forever working towards making our experiential condition the same as our position in Christ, and so becoming more and more like Him. Again, even though our spirit-man is conditionally sanctified by the Blood of the Lamb, our minds are not sanctified until the Holy Spirit brings renewal, all by His grace which has been afforded to us through the Cross of Christ.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

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- 2 Matt Perman <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- 3 Dr. Bernard Rossier, A Study Through The Book Of Romans, Vol.4, pg.229.
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