

WHAT IS SIN?

(Excerpts from the booklet, "The Vicarious Atonement of Christ")

By Jesse Morrell

In God's Moral Government, morality is of the inward intention of the heart (Gen. 6:5; Joel 2:12-13; Ps. 51:6; Isa. 29:13; Jer. 4:4; Eze. 33:31; Matt. 5:8; 6:1-5; 12:35; 15:8; 15:11; 15:17-20; 23:25-28; Mk. 7:6; 7:15-23; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 8:12; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Titus 1:15). All sin or righteousness comes out of the will or heart (Isa. 14:13-14; Eze. 11:21; Matt. 5:28; 12:35; 15:18-19; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 6:17; 10:10; 2 Pet. 2:14). Moral perfection is purity of heart or motive (Matt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22) which is perfection of heart or intention (1 Kin. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kin. 20:3; 1 Chro. 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chro. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps. 101:2; Isa. 38:3). God judges the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 26:1-2; 17:3; 44:18-21; 51:6; 139:1-2, 23; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 2 Cor. 8:12), because a person's moral character is their will, intention, motive or heart (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 5:28; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 Jn. 3:15). Love is the essence of all virtue (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). There is no virtue at all without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3). To have outward acts of righteousness, without an inward heart of righteousness, is to have no righteousness at all (Matt. 5:20; 7:15; 23:28; Lk. 11:39). The Kingdom of God is internal (Lk. 17:21). And since we only have one heart, we are holy or sinful, righteous or unrighteous, moral or immoral, loving or selfish, obedient or disobedient, at any given time, but never both at the same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 2:10; 3:11-12). You cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13), since you only have one heart, you only have one will.

All sin consists in sinning, sin is a choice to transgress known law (Jn. 9:41; Rom. 5:13; Jas. 4:17; 1 Jn. 3:4). Sin is not a metaphysical constitution, a physical or spiritual substance, disobedience is a free moral choice (1 Sam. 8:7; 2 Kin. 18:12; Ps. 78:8, 10; Isa. 5:4; 5:24; 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 3:13; 5:3; Zech. 8:17; Lk. 19:14; Rom. 6:12; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Jn. 3:4), a choice to do evil instead of the good that you know you should choose (Jn. 3:19; 9:41; Jas. 4:17). Sin is not a defect or disability of nature but is rebellion of the will or an unwillingness of heart (Ps. 78:37; Isa. 14:13-14; 30:9; 30:15-16; 31:6; 42:24; Eze. 20:7-8; Neh. 9:29; Zech. 7:11-13; Lk. 19:14; 19:27). Sin is an unreasonable or unintelligence choice (Isa. 30:1; 47:8; 65:2; Ecc. 9:3; Matt. 7:26; Mk. 6:6; Lk. 6:49; Tit. 3:3). Sin is to rebel against the reigning of God (Deut. 9:7; 9:24; 31:27; Ps. 78:8; Isa. 30:1; 30:9; 31:6; 63:10; Jer. 4:17; 5:23; Lam. 3:42; Eze. 2:3; 20:7-8; Lk. 7:30; 19:14), an attempt to dethrone God and establish yourself as the center of the universe (Isa. 14:13-14). The essence of sin is a selfish rebellious heart (Ps. 77:8; Isa. 14:13-14; Jer. 5:23; Eze. 20:7-8; Lk. 19:14). Sin is a selfish motive of the will (Matt. 23:5), a state of the inner heart (Matt. 5:28; 15:18-19), which manifests itself into outward action (Matt. 12:33; 12:35). Inward sin, a selfish motive of heart, is completely voluntary (Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12). A man determines the moral condition of his own heart (1 Kin. 8:61; Zec. 7:10; Eze. 18:31; Ps. 119:112). Remember, sin involves the whole heart, so an individual cannot be partly holy (partly loving) and partly sinful (partly selfish) at the

same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 2:10; 3:11-12). To sin (to be selfish) or not to sin (to love) is a daily choice (Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31). The existence of sin is a contingency, it doesn't have to exist, it is always avoidable and optional (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13).

All sin is either against the person of God (Ex. 10:16; 20:3-11; Deut. 1:41; 9:16; Josh. 7:20; Jdg. 10:10; 2 Kg. 17:7; Jer. 3:25; 8:14; Lk. 10:27), against the person of your neighbor (Ex. 10:16; 20:12-17; 2 Chro. 6:22; Lk. 10:27), or against the person of yourself (1 Cor. 6:18). All sin is rebellion against the law or Government of God (Lev. 4:22; Dan. 9:11; Neh. 9:26; 1 Jn. 3:4).

Sin is not the will of God (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8). God wants men to be sinless (Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13; 1 Chro. 28:9; 2 Chro. 19:9; Ps. 4:4; Isa. 1:16; Matt. 5:48; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:7; Rev. 3:2). Yet sin occurs (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; Jdg. 2:19; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Rom. 3:23). Therefore the will of God is not always done (Isa. 5:2-4; Matt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2; Zach. 14:9).

This explains the broken heart of God, God is grieved and disappointed with men because of their sin (Gen. 6:5-6; 1 Sam. 15:35; Ps. 78:40; 81:13; 95:10; Isa. 1:14; 63:10; 53:3; Eze. 6:9; Mk. 3:5; Eph. 4:30), because men sin when they don't have to (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13). God says that sin is "a very horrible thing" (Jer. 18:32), and therefore the Lord does not delight in sin (Isa. 66:4; 65:12; Mal. 2:17), but rather abhors it or hates it (Deut. 12:31; Prov. 6:16-19; Zech. 8:15). It's false to say God delights in sin (Mal. 2:17).

Since God doesn't want us to sin at all (Isa. 1:16; 55:7; Job 34:31-32; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:26-28), God gives us the ability not to sin, so that we don't have to sin (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 5:4; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Php. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22).