



Sin

## VICTORIOUS LIVING

RON HAWKINS

(1 Kings 8:31-40)



o one likes to talk about sin. We risk being labeled old-fashioned and insensitive if we insist that sin is a central issue in the struggles people face. However, insist we must, for it is the clear teaching of Scripture that sin is: (1) a condition inherited from Adam, (2) a lifelong challenge for Christians, and (3) a series of battles that can be won through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

### SIN—A CONDITION INHERITED FROM ADAM

All of humanity finds its origin in the union of Adam and Eve. Tragically, this connection means that we are controlled by Adam's fallen sinful nature—hence, we are sinners who need change. In the Bible, sin is described as: lawlessness and faithlessness, falling short of the mark, rebellion against authority, and an indifference to or crossing of established boundaries. Above all, sin destroys a vital relationship with God. Failure to deal with sin results in a corruption of our being and, ultimately, spiritual and physical death (Rom. 6:23).

### SIN—A LIFELONG CHALLENGE

The Bible says that God loves people, pursues sinners, and has done all that is necessary to restore us to fellowship with Himself. However, we must believe and confess Christ as Savior in order to be set free from sin (Rom. 10:9, 10). Then the indwelling Holy Spirit provides us with the power to overcome sin on a daily basis and make progress toward Christlike character. When we fail to be obedient to Christ's teachings, God insists that we acknowledge these failures as sin, repent, confess, seek forgiveness, recommit to obedience, and seek restoration to God and one another (1 John 1:9). Yet sin will continue to be a challenge as long as we live. Paul recog-

nized this as he battled with his sin (Rom. 7:19-25).

### TRAINING, NOT TRYING, TO OVERCOME SIN

Believers have been delivered from sin, but they still must work to overcome sinful habits. This is accomplished not by "trying" to overcome sin, but by engaging in a training regimen that results in the mastery of disciplines that help us make the right choices. In our everyday life and soul care ministries, we must remind ourselves and God's children that overcoming sinful thoughts and behaviors must be the goal, and that the pattern for overcoming sin transcends times and cultures. This pattern is fleshed out for the nation of Israel in 1 Kings 8:31-40. The consequences of unconfessed sin are broken fellowship with God and others, as well as the experience of God's discipline.

Sincere Christians can train for godliness by making godly choices with regard to various areas of life. For example:

**The Mind**—The Bible is the centerpiece in God's plan for transforming us from the old ways in Adam to the new ways in Christ. The reading and memorizing of God's Word, and the instruction received through it, are God's primary agents for helping His children in their battle against sin. Making

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certain that God's Word is richly dwelling in the mind is the first priority for people who desire to overcome sin.

*The Will*—Truth in the mind must be acted upon. We have been given by our Creator the freedom to choose and are responsible for our choices. The will is open or closed to the Spirit and others as a consequence of these choices. In our battle against sin, we must *choose* to put off old behaviors that appealed to the flesh and replace them with new behaviors like Bible study, worship, prayer, and fasting, which foster richer connections with God and others.

*The Body*—The body is the seat of appetites like hunger, thirst, and physical desire. God intends that we should enjoy these appetites within the guidelines provided in Scripture. We must learn these guidelines and stay within them in order to keep our bodies away from sin.

*The Emotions*—We must choose to pay careful attention to our emotions. The absence of positive emotions is often the first indication that someone is believing or behaving poorly. When beliefs are based in error or left unsupported by appropriate actions, people experience the loss of joy. Emotions are powerful allies in our quest to determine whether one's beliefs and behavior are supported by truth.

*The Holy Spirit*—Paul insists that fulfilling the will of God requires the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:15-21). The crucial issue is the *choice* to follow the Spirit's lead. God's Word richly nestled in the mind is a prerequisite for and a companion to the Spirit-filled life. The list of behaviors and experiences that flow from the life of one whose mind is "richly" filled with the Word

of God (Col. 3:12-21) is virtually identical to the list of behaviors that flow from the Spirit-filled life (Gal. 5:22-25). Choosing to be filled with the Holy Spirit moment by moment is vitally important for those who would experience God's peace and power.

*Community*—The believing community that we call the church is essential for soul care and the healing of hurts. We grow to maturity in Christ only when we choose to be surrounded by a group of people who love us, share with us, dream with us, exhort us regarding our shortcomings, and applaud us for our advances.

Overcoming sin is possible through good choices and the power of the resurrected Christ. Believers will not be "sinless" until heaven, but in the meantime, we can experience marvelous victories in our battle with our enemy called "sin."

#### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of sin include:

- John 3:1-8
- 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- Ephesians 5:1-21
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- Hebrews 4:12; 12:1, 2
- James 1:15; 4:17
- 1 John 2:15, 16; 3:1-9

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To Learn More: Turn to the key passage notes on sin at 1 John 1:9 on page 1675. See also the personality profile of Isaiah on page 883.

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fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

#### SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; <sup>23</sup>and he said: "LORD God of Israel, *there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.* <sup>24</sup>You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day. <sup>25</sup>Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' <sup>26</sup>And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.

<sup>27</sup>"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! <sup>28</sup>Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: <sup>29</sup>that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. <sup>30</sup>And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

<sup>31</sup>"When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes and

takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, <sup>32</sup>then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

<sup>33</sup>"When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, <sup>34</sup>then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

<sup>35</sup>"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, <sup>36</sup>then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

<sup>37</sup>"When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is*; <sup>38</sup>whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: <sup>39</sup>then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), <sup>40</sup>that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

<sup>41</sup>"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a

#### SOUL NOTE



**Just a Prayer Away (8:33-40)** The temple was to be a house of prayer and a place of repentance. When the people of Israel sinned, Solomon prayed that God would hear their prayers of repentance and forgive them. This would happen continually, for sin is a constant reality. Solomon's prayer reveals God's compassion in dealing with His people when they have failed. God wants to forgive, and He offers it when He sees our repentance and change of heart. He wants His people to come to Him, so He can heal and forgive. **Topic: Sin**

## WHAT WAS HEARD, SEEN, AND TOUCHED

**1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—<sup>2</sup>the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—<sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And these things we write to you that your<sup>a</sup> joy may be full.

## FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM AND ONE ANOTHER

<sup>5</sup>This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not

sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

**2** My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup>And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

## THE TEST OF KNOWING HIM

<sup>3</sup>Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup>He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>5</sup>But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. <sup>6</sup>He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

<sup>7</sup>Brethren,<sup>a</sup> I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.<sup>b</sup> <sup>8</sup>Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup>He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup>He who

1:4 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text read *our*. 2:7 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *Beloved*. <sup>b</sup>NU-Text omits *from the beginning*.

## KEY PASSAGE



Sin

## PAID IN FULL

(1:9)

Sin is disobeying God. Although God created people to be good and holy, He also gave them the choice to disobey—and they did. Since the first sin, all people have been born with a sin nature. God is holy, and He cannot have a relationship with sinful people—unless something is done about the sin. But instead of sending punishment upon sinful human beings, God took the punishment Himself: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Through His death Christ paid the penalty for sin so that we could have a relationship with God.

The problem, however, is that we still have our sin natures. We still sin, but we can come to God and be forgiven. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When we confess, God forgives, because His Son paid the penalty. We will never be completely sinless in this life, but as believers our lives should be characterized by the desire to follow Christ and avoid sin.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about sin on pages 446, 447. See also the personality profile of Isaiah on page 883.

Nor will the belt on their loins be loosed,  
 Nor the strap of their sandals be broken;  
 28 Whose arrows are sharp,  
 And all their bows bent;  
 Their horses' hooves will seem like flint,  
 And their wheels like a whirlwind.  
 29 Their roaring will be like a lion,  
 They will roar like young lions;  
 Yes, they will roar  
 And lay hold of the prey;  
 They will carry it away safely,  
 And no one will deliver.  
 30 In that day they will roar against them  
 Like the roaring of the sea.  
 And if one looks to the land,  
 Behold, darkness and sorrow;  
 And the light is darkened by the clouds.

#### ISAIAH CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

**6** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
 The whole earth is full of His glory!"

<sup>4</sup>And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup>So I said:

"Woe is me, for I am undone!  
 Because I am a man of unclean lips,

#### PERSONALITY PROFILE



### ISAIAH—SET FREE FROM SIN

(ISAIAH 6)

God is the master of the unexpected invasion, and He will use any tool at hand when He breaks through a person's defenses. The walls of arguments, excuses, and ignorance that often stand between people and God crumble under God's persistent grace. His purpose is neither to defeat nor to conquer. He wants to set us free. He knows that everything we use to try to keep God out actually only keeps us imprisoned within.

Sometimes God uses a personal crisis or someone else's troubles to get our attention. Occasionally, God uses a national crisis to prepare us for change. Such was the case with Isaiah.

The death of godly King Uzziah marked the end of an era for the nation of Judah. In that moment of crisis, the prophet Isaiah saw a new vision of God sitting on the throne of heaven. He was vividly reminded that God was still on the throne in spite of the nation's uncertain future.

Isaiah's ministry eventually spanned the reigns of several kings. But his personal preparation for ministry occurred when he faced God in all His holiness and himself in all his sinfulness. His pronouncement of "woe" (Is. 6:5) upon himself was a confession of sin. Because of his repentant heart, Isaiah received a beautiful sign of forgiveness from the Lord. In his vision of God's holiness, Isaiah saw one of the angels take a burning coal off the altar of heaven and place it upon his, Isaiah's, lips and announce that his sin had been purged.

Isaiah's acute awareness of sin was replaced by a grateful willingness to serve the God who had cleansed him. The Lord asked: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Isaiah responded, "Here am I! Send me" (Is. 6:8). Our willingness to serve God and others will be deeply influenced by the degree to which we have received God's gracious work in our lives. If our defenses have fallen and we have been set free, we will want to be put to work just like Isaiah. Forgiveness liberates us to be useful to the Lord.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about sin on pages 446, 447. See also the key passage note at 1 John 1:9 on page 1675.

## THE BURNT OFFERING

**1** Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.

<sup>3</sup>‘If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup>He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>6</sup>And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. <sup>7</sup>The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. <sup>8</sup>Then the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; <sup>9</sup>but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>‘If his offering is of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish. <sup>11</sup>He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. <sup>12</sup>And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; <sup>13</sup>but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring it all and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>‘And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD is of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. <sup>15</sup>The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. <sup>16</sup>And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. <sup>17</sup>Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

## THE GRAIN OFFERING

**2** ‘When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. <sup>2</sup>He shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’. It is most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

<sup>4</sup>‘And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. <sup>5</sup>But if your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. <sup>6</sup>You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.

<sup>7</sup>‘If your offering is a grain offering baked in a covered pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. <sup>8</sup>You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. <sup>9</sup>Then the priest shall take

from the and burn by fire, a is left of and his so the LORD :

<sup>11</sup>‘No gr LORD shall burn no : to the LO of the fir LORD, bu for a swe your grain you shall : your God ing. With salt.

<sup>14</sup>‘If you fruits to th offering of roasted or heads. <sup>15</sup>A frankincen the priest s of its beat the frankin the LORD.

## THE PEACE

**3** ‘When offering male or fe: ish before on the hea door of the sons, the around on the sacrific made by fi the entrail: trails, <sup>4</sup>the them by t tached to t remove; <sup>5</sup>a altar upon wood that by fire, a s

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## SOUL NOTE

**Serious Business (1:4, 5)** Many people regard sin rather casually, but that was difficult for the ancient Israelites. They had to bring a special animal, place a hand on its head, and then kill it as an atonement for their sin. Every bleeding sacrifice was an immediate reminder that sin stood between them and God. These sacrifices also pointed to the sacrificial death of one far more precious—the perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ. His death paid, once for all, the total penalty for our sin. Also, it reminds us of the seriousness of sin. Sin is costly, but Jesus paid the price. **Topic: Sin**

the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>8</sup>He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which is on the entrails, <sup>9</sup>the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, <sup>10</sup>as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. <sup>11</sup>But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— <sup>12</sup>the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

13<sup>Now</sup> if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; 14<sup>when</sup> the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. 15<sup>And</sup> the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. 16<sup>The</sup> anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. 17<sup>Then</sup> the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. 18<sup>And</sup> he shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 19<sup>He</sup> shall take all the fat from it and burn *it* on the altar. 20<sup>And</sup> he shall do with

the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. <sup>21</sup>Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is a sin offering for the assembly.

<sup>22</sup>When a ruler has sinned, and done *something* unintentionally *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *in anything* which should not be done, and is guilty, <sup>23</sup>or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. <sup>24</sup>And he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It is a sin offering. <sup>25</sup>The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. <sup>26</sup>And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

<sup>27</sup>If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, <sup>28</sup>or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. <sup>29</sup>And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. <sup>30</sup>Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour *all the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. <sup>31</sup>He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. **So the priest shall**

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## SOUL NOTE



**Always a Way** (4:3) Biblical law assumed that leaders would fail just like everybody else. By commanding a sin offering for the anointed priests (4:3) and for the rulers (4:22–26), God made it clear that their leaders were not gods.

Sooner or later, these human authorities would need atonement for their sins, just like everyone else. We should not be shocked when religious and political leaders fail. No one can live above sin without God's help, and no one is beyond God's grace. There is always a way for sinners, even sinful leaders, to be forgiven. **Topic: Sin**



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Telling  
Topics**

## RAHAB HIDES THE SPIES

**2** Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove<sup>a</sup> to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. <sup>2</sup>And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

<sup>3</sup>So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

<sup>4</sup>Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from. <sup>5</sup>And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."

<sup>6</sup>(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) <sup>7</sup>Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

<sup>8</sup>Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, <sup>9</sup>and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. <sup>10</sup>For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup>And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. <sup>12</sup>Now therefore, I beg you, swear to

me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, <sup>13</sup>and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

<sup>14</sup>So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

<sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. <sup>16</sup>And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

<sup>17</sup>So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, <sup>18</sup>unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. <sup>19</sup>So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. <sup>20</sup>And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

<sup>21</sup>Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

<sup>22</sup>They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along

2:1 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *Shittim*

## SOUL NOTE



**Included (2:1-16)** Courageous Rahab risked her life for the people of Israel. She was convinced that their God was "God in heaven above and on earth beneath"—the one true God (2:11). Her employment as a harlot did not place her beyond God's grace. All people are sinners and must come to God for

forgiveness, regardless of their past. Rahab left her former life and joined the Israelites. She later appears in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5). **Topic: Sin**

us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! <sup>8</sup>O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? <sup>9</sup>For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

#### THE SIN OF ACHAN

<sup>10</sup>So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? <sup>11</sup>Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. <sup>12</sup>Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. <sup>13</sup>Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." <sup>14</sup>In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. <sup>15</sup>Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' "

<sup>16</sup>So Joshua rose early in the morning and

brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. <sup>17</sup>He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. <sup>18</sup>Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

<sup>19</sup>Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."

<sup>20</sup>And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: <sup>21</sup>When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

<sup>22</sup>So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. <sup>23</sup>And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. <sup>24</sup>Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup>And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

<sup>26</sup>Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. There-

#### SOUL NOTE



**It Hurts (7:22-25)** Achan sinned by taking some of the plunder from Jericho for himself, an act that had been forbidden (6:19). As a result, the Israelites lost the next battle. When Achan's sin was discovered, he and his entire family paid the ultimate price. Sin always hurts the sinner and others. No one sins in a vacuum; sins always have consequences. Perhaps we would be more willing to turn away from sin if we could see the consequences that will affect not only us, but those dearest to us.

**Topic: Sin**

brings forth evil things. <sup>36</sup>But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup>For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

#### THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES ASK FOR A SIGN

<sup>38</sup>Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

<sup>39</sup>But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup>For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. <sup>42</sup>The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here."

#### AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNS

<sup>43</sup>"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup>Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup>Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

#### JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS SEND FOR HIM

<sup>46</sup>While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood

outside, seeking to speak with Him. <sup>47</sup>Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

<sup>48</sup>But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" <sup>49</sup>And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup>For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

#### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

**13** On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. <sup>2</sup>And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

<sup>3</sup>Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. <sup>7</sup>And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

#### THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

<sup>10</sup>And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

"He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have

#### SOUL NOTE



**Unpardonable?** (12:31, 32) God promises to forgive our sins when we repent (1 John 1:9). There is one sin that cannot be forgiven, but believers don't have to worry about accidentally committing that sin. This is because the unpardonable sin is continually rejecting the Holy Spirit's conviction, stubbornly refusing to turn from sin and repent. It indicates an irreversible hardness in the heart. Only those who have rejected faith in Christ can commit this sin. It is unpardonable because they have rejected the only means of pardon. **Topic: Sin**

Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) <sup>6</sup>Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

<sup>7</sup>For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? <sup>8</sup>And *why* not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

#### ALL HAVE SINNED

<sup>9</sup>What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

<sup>10</sup>As it is written:

- <sup>11</sup> "There is none righteous, no, not one;  
There is none who understands;  
There is none who seeks after God.  
<sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside;  
They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one."<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>13</sup> "Their throat is an open tomb;  
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";<sup>a</sup>  
"The poison of asps is under their lips";<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>14</sup> "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
<sup>16</sup> Destruction and misery are in their ways;  
And the way of peace they have not known."<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup>Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be

justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

#### GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH

<sup>21</sup>But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all<sup>a</sup> who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup>to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

#### BOASTING EXCLUDED

<sup>27</sup>Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. <sup>29</sup>Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

#### ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

<sup>4</sup>What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the

**3:12** <sup>a</sup>Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20  
**3:13** <sup>a</sup>Psalms 5:9 <sup>b</sup>Psalms 140:3 **3:14** <sup>a</sup>Psalms 10:7  
**3:17** <sup>a</sup>Isaiah 59:7, 8 **3:18** <sup>a</sup>Psalms 36:1  
**3:22** <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *and on all*.

#### SOUL NOTE



**All (3:23)** It's a fact—"All have sinned." Except for Jesus, not one person can claim to be sinless. We are born in sin because we inherited the sin nature from our father Adam. We all make choices that violate God's law and desires and break His heart. We can do nothing to save ourselves. No amount of good works, compassion on others, or self-sacrifice can earn salvation. Sin separates us from a holy God, but we are not left hopeless. God reached out to us, sending His Son to die for us (5:8). Because of God's great love and mercy, He offers a gift—"eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). **Topic: Sin**

that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup>Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

<sup>13</sup>And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

<sup>14</sup>For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

#### FROM SLAVES OF SIN TO SLAVES OF GOD

<sup>15</sup>What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup>And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup>I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

<sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup>But now having been set free from

sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### FREED FROM THE LAW

<sup>7</sup>Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

<sup>2</sup>For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

then if, while her husband lives, she marries

another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. <sup>5</sup>For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. <sup>6</sup>But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

#### SIN'S ADVANTAGE IN THE LAW

<sup>7</sup>What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

ROMANS 6:14

#### SOUL NOTE



**Crucified with Christ (6:6-11)** Rome was filled with slaves, many of whom had been brought from conquered lands. To be a slave means to serve another and to have one's entire life controlled by them. All people are "slaves of sin" because we are born in sin. But in a transaction that we cannot completely comprehend, God took our sin (our "old man") and crucified it with Jesus on the Cross. Thus believers can consider themselves dead to sin and freed from its tyranny. The struggle against sin and temptation will continue until death, but believers can trust Christ to help them win their battles. **Topic: Sin**

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