

# Major Bible Themes

BY

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### SIN: GOD'S REMEDY FOR IT

While in the Biblical doctrine of sin there are certain distinctions, two universal facts should first be noted:

1. Sin is always equally sinful whether it be committed by the heathen or the civilized, the unregenerate or the regenerate. The question of many stripes or few is one of the judgments to be imposed upon the sinner; but any sin in itself is unvaryingly sinful because it outrages the holiness of God.
2. Sin can be cured only on the ground of the shed blood of the Son of God. This was as true of those who anticipated the death of Christ by animal sacrifices as it is now of those who look back to that death by faith. Divine forgiveness has never been a mere act of leniency in remitting the penalty of sin. If the penalty is remitted, it is because Another as a substitute has met the holy demands against the sinner. In the old order it was only after the priest had offered the atoning blood-sacrifice, which anticipated the death of Christ, that the sinner was forgiven (Lev. 6:7; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 19:22; Num. 15:25, 26, 28). Likewise, after Christ has died the

same truth obtains. We read: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7).

The substitutionary work of Christ upon the cross is infinitely perfect in its sufficiency, therefore the sinner who trusts in Christ not only is forgiven, but he is even justified forever (Rom. 3:24). God has never treated sin lightly. Forgiveness may impose no burden on the sinner, but he is forgiven and justified only because the undiminished divine penalty has been borne by Christ (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

## **I. SIN BEFORE AND AFTER THE CROSS**

1. The divine method of dealing with sin before the cross is said to have been by atonement, which word, in its Biblical use, means simply to cover. The blood of bulls and goats could not, and did not, take away sin (Heb. 10:4). The offering of sacrificial blood indicated on the part of the sinner the acknowledgment of the just penalty of death (Lev. 1:4), and, on the part of God, the sacrifice anticipated the efficacious blood of Christ. By symbolizing the shed blood of Christ, the atoning blood of the sacrifices served to cover sin, as it were, in covenant promise until that day when Christ would deal in finality with the sin of the world.

Two New Testament passages throw light upon the meaning of the Old Testament word atonement or covering:

(1) In Romans 3:25 the word "remission" has the meaning of "passing over" and in this connection it is stated that when Christ died He proved God to have been righteous in having passed over the sins which were committed before the cross and for which the atoning blood of the sacrifices had been shed. God had promised a sufficient Lamb, and had forgiven sin on the strength of that promise. Therefore, by the death of Christ, God was proven to have been righteous in all that He had promised.

(2) In Acts 17:30 it is stated that, before the cross, God "winked at" sin. This word should be translated "overlooked."

2. The divine method of dealing with sin since the cross is stated in Romans 3:26. Christ has died. No longer is the value of His sacrifice a matter of expectation to be taken in covenant and symbolized by the blood of animals; the blood of Christ has been shed, and now all that can be asked of any person, regardless of his degree of guilt, is that he believe in the thing which, in infinite grace, has been accomplished for him. This passage declares that Christ upon the cross so answered the divine judgment against every sinner that God can remain just, or uncompromised in His holiness, when at the same time and apart from all penalties, He justifies the sinner who does no more than believe in Jesus.

As before stated, the word atonement, which occurs only in the Old Testament, indicated the "passing over," "overlooking," and "covering" of sin; but Christ in dealing with sin on the cross did not pass it over or cover it. Of His sufficient sacrifice it is said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29; Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:4; 1 John 3:5). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). There was no temporizing or partial dealing with sin at the cross. This great issue between God and man was there dealt with

in a manner which is satisfying even to the infinite holiness of God, and the only question that remains is whether man is satisfied with the thing which satisfies God. To accept the work of Christ for us is to believe upon the Saviour to the saving of the soul.

## **II. SIN OF THE UNSAVED AND THE SAVED**

1. The forgiveness of sin is accomplished for the sinner when he believes upon Christ and is a part of his salvation. Many things which constitute salvation are wrought of God at the moment one believes; but forgiveness is never received by the unsaved apart from the whole work of saving grace, and on the ground of believing on Christ as Saviour.

2. In the divine dealing with the sins of the Christian, it is the sin question alone that is in view, and the Christian's sin is forgiven, not on the ground of believing unto salvation, but on the ground of confessing the sin (1 John 1:9).

The effect of the Christian's sin, among other things, is the loss of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and the grieving of the indwelling Spirit. The child of God who has sinned will be restored to fellowship, joy, blessing, and power, when he confesses his sin.

While the effect of sin upon the believer is the loss of blessing, which blessing may be renewed by confession, the effect of the believer's sin upon God is a far more serious matter. But for the value of the shedblood of Christ and the present advocacy of Christ in Heaven (1 John 3:1, 2; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24), sin would separate Christians from God forever. However, we are assured that the blood is efficacious (1 John 2:2) and the Advocate's cause is righteous (1 John 2:1). The sinning saint is not lost because of his sin, since, even while sinning, he has an Advocate with the Father. This truth which alone forms the basis on which any Christian has ever been kept saved for a moment, so far from encouraging Christians to sin, is presented in the Scriptures to the end that the Christian "sin not," or "be not sinning" (1 John 2:1). Beholding the Saviour advocating for us in Heaven must cause us to hesitate before every solicitation to sin.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the first universal fact concerning sin?
2. What is the second universal fact concerning sin?
3. How was the second fact illustrated in the Old Testament order?
4. On what ground does God forgive sin?
5. What is the meaning of the word atonement?
6. What light is thrown on atonement in Romans 3:25 and Acts 17:30?
7. What is now required of the sinner in view of the fact that his sin has already been borne by Christ?

8. What did Christ do with sin on the cross if he did not atone for it, or cover it?
9. How much sin did He take away?
10. God having been satisfied with the solution of the sin question at the cross, what is left for the sinner to do?
11. With what else must the sinner's forgiveness be combined, and on what ground may it be received?
12. On what ground is the Christian forgiven and how may forgiveness be received?
13. a. What is the effect of a Christian's sin upon himself?
  - b. What is the effect upon God?
14. a. Describe the work of Christ as Advocate.
  - b. At what time in relation to the Christian's sin does Christ advocate in his behalf?