

The Church of God
(La Iglesia de Dios)

The Word “Sin” is the Penalty – By: Don Roth

THE WORD “SIN” IS THE PENALTY

This word “sin” is misunderstood by many. The Old Testament and the New Testament scholars alike define it as “missing the mark.” Is it true that God forgives us for missing the mark? Is there any urgency felt by wanting to avoid sin with such an indecisive definition?

When examining this word “sin” in its true biblical sense—as God wants it understood—it takes on a very ominous meaning. The only way to comprehend the meaning of this word “sin” is to understand it as God applies it to His laws and commandments. In the Bible it is found how sin impacts us in a life threatening way; and is why it is of utmost importance to realize what this word means and how it affects our existence. There is no doubt that this one word “sin” defines the breaking of every command of our Father and His Son.

Here is how the Bible defines it in a straightforward, uncomplicated way. **I John 3:4** (KJV) says, ***“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”*** And in **Ezekiel 18:4** (KJV) it reads: ***“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”*** Another example is **Romans 6:23** (KJV) ***“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

It is not difficult to understand that sin is the name for the wage—which is eternal death (not burning in hell forever). It is the ultimate penalty and precisely what the word “sin” signifies. The following NKJV scriptures point to the fact that death is the penalty named for breaking God’s laws. **Exodus 21:12** ***“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.”*** **Exodus 21:15** ***“And he who strikes his father or mother shall surely be put to death.”*** **Exodus 22:19-20** ***“Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. He who sacrifices to any god, except the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.”*** Then what is sin? Is it THE PENALTY? Sin is the name given for breaking any of God’s instructions which carry a death penalty. Unless the person recognizes their error, repents and makes a correction in their life, and understands that the death penalty was paid in full by our Savior, Christ, the eternal death penalty stands.

Every life has physical disabilities. The most obvious is aging. Everyone grows old and pays the physical death penalty—whether in aging or another disability. All are the result of sin. Everyone dies in this physical life, but it is the eternal death penalty each seeks to avoid.

This is made clear in **John 9** where the disciples ask Christ an important question: ***“Who sinned that caused this man’s blindness?”*** In **John 9:3** Jesus answers. ***“Jesus answered, neither this***

man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.” This exchange between Christ and His disciples clearly demonstrates that there is physical sin which results in disabilities. Christ did not say His disciples were wrong, but that this was a special situation where the true definition of sin did not apply, which is the breaking of God’s commandments.

In the gospel of **Matthew 9:2-8**, **Mark 2:3-12**, and **Luke 5:17-25** this true understanding of sin is made plain by what Christ said as He was about to heal the paralyzed youth. The first statement Christ made to the youth in Matthew was “... **Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.**” Here Jesus clarifies that He is removing the sin which took away the physical punishment of being paralyzed. By saying “your sins are forgiven” He is taking away the penalty, and that gives us God’s definition of sin.

Without the remission of your sins – that is without taking away the penalty—there remains only one thing, death. **II Thessalonians 1:8-9** ***“In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.”***

Though the penalty may not be immediately carried out when the sin is committed, without remission there is no doubt that the penalty will be fulfilled.

Then what is the end of the sinner? **Malachi 4:1-3** ***“For behold the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. ‘And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ Says the LORD of hosts, ‘That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stalled-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the souls of your feet On the day that I do this,’ says the LORD of hosts.”***

Sin is an action that cannot be separated from its penalty. **Ezekiel 18:4, 20** ***“Behold all souls are Mine; the soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins shall die. Verse 20*** repeats: ***“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”***

The final penalty for those failing to receive the remission of their sins through the blood of Christ’s sacrifice is eternal death. **Hebrews 9:22** ***“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”*** There can be no doubt that the word “sin encompasses the death penalty.

No matter which law is broken, the breaking is defined, or called “sin,” carrying with it a death penalty. Unrepented sin has the eternal death penalty applied.

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