

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



Volume 36

January 2016

Number 6

Do You Understand Sin?

A Preview of Our 2016 Lectureship Book

By Brian R. Kenyon

In this day and age, the concept of sin is dismissed by many. The constant rejection of God and the increasing conformity to political correctness where “tolerance” is the new morality have taken their toll on the conscience of many. When people can accept such sins as “same sex marriage” and transgenderism, the observant Christian can know people have rejected the very notion of sin. This 2016 lectureship and accompanying book take a fresh look at sin, the very reason Jesus came to this earth and went to the cross. As is customary for the *Harvester* before lectureship, excerpts from the book are given so the readers will get a better idea of the content of this lectureship.

In his article, “Before Sin Entered the World,” Doug Burleson writes:

God created both males and females in his image (Gen. 1:26-27). Men and women are not like the animals. Men and women all bear God’s image. Both men and women are necessary and essential for the fulfillment of God’s plan and the survival of the human race. God stated that males and females should work together to fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). God gave both males and females a special task. This world should not be described a “man’s world” or a “woman’s world,” but rather should be acknowledged as God’s world. Men are not “from Mars” and women are not “from Venus,” rather they are all “from God” and are to live their lives in submission to God’s will. God’s instructions concerning marriage in Genesis 2:24 serve as the finishing touch on God’s provision of a companion for man.

God truly created the perfect cultural setting in Eden for man to thrive forever in perfect communion with God. God fulfilled man’s needs by providing him with a hospitable home (the perfect cultural habitat), favorable food (nourishment that would cause him to live forever), worthwhile work (as one in dominion over the animals in Gen. 1:28), and a complementary companion (a relationship with woman serving as a helpmeet to man). Yet ultimately sin would affect every one of these realities.

This knowledge of evil became a stumbling block for humankind. In arrogance, man began to view himself as God’s colleague rather than God’s creation. Death resulted from one man’s choice (Rom. 5:12). Because of man’s sinful rebellion against God, harmony in all relationships turned to conflict. Life was abruptly replaced with certain death. The order of Eden (God-man-woman-serpent) was

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reversed and led to chaos (serpent-woman-man-God). Honor became shame. Joy turned to pain. Fellowship was replaced by brokenness. Death resulted from one man's choice (Rom. 5:12). Because of man's sinful rebellion against God, harmony in all relationships turned to conflict. Life was abruptly replaced with certain death. The order of Eden (God-man-woman-serpent) was reversed and led to chaos (serpent-woman-man-God). Honor became shame. Joy turned to pain. Fellowship was replaced by brokenness.

[S]in and evil did not come from God. The Lord created a world that was good in every way (Gen. 1:31). So where did this evil come from? It came from the choice of a man. Adam made the decision by his own free will, and "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so sin spread to all men—because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12). As a result of Adam's own sin death began to reign (Rom. 5:16). The accounts of Adam's transgression against God and the effects thereof are not fiction or folklore. According to the New Testament record, the historical Adam is as real as the historical Jesus (cf. Lk. 3:38). Jesus serves as the solution for the environment that Adam's sin changed. In First Corinthians 15:21-22, readers learn, "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

Rick Kenyon wrote an article titled "Calvinism's Influential View of Sin." This article is the culmination of a couple years' discussion with a Lutheran "pastor," who was a former neighbor and classmate of the Rick. As a result, it gives a unique perspective on the doctrine of original sin. Rick writes:

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all

men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Therefore, just as through one verse Calvinism entered in the Bible, and error through Calvinism, and thus error spread to all verses, because all are Calvinized. This caricature of Calvinism paints an oversimplification of a doctrine and lens deeply rooted throughout the sphere of "Christendom." However, to say that Romans 5:12 is the pillar verse for Calvinism would be unfair and unjust both to those who ascribe to it and to those who seek to refute it. Every self-proclaimed Christian has a responsibility to "test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thes. 5:21) and to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Calvinism's starting point is the doctrine of original sin. Based on this doctrine, Calvinism's framework attempts to connect the depravity of mankind to the salvation of mankind based on the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign, but his sovereignty should not exclude humanity's free will nor mankind's responsibility to obey God. Those who adhere to the doctrine of original sin must account for its inconsistencies. Those who do not adhere to the doctrine should know how to recognize it and how to beware of its influences.

If Calvinism's view of sin goes undetected in the church, its fruit will be false doctrine. Inherited sin implies that mankind cannot choose God unless God first acts upon him ("direct operation" of the Holy Spirit); the Bible teaches that God "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Inherited sin implies that mankind cannot help but to disobey God ("We're all sinners" or

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Special Gifts: Atlantic Christian Fund.

Special Contribution: Levi-Kennedy Memorial Scholarship Fund.

*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month's financial statement.

The Harvester

Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803
(863) 683-4043

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“Nobody’s perfect”); the Bible teaches mankind is able and responsible for his obedience to God (Josh. 24:14-15; Lk. 13:3, 5). Inherited sin implies that either Jesus was born in sin or born with a fleshly spiritual advantage; the Bible teaches that Jesus was just like the rest of humanity except without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Forest Antemesaris, one of the school’s younger students and part of the Monday forum dealing with issues youth face, writes in his article, “WiFi Wisdom”:


The Proverbs writer proclaimed, “One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless” (Pr. 14:16, ESV). A wise person will approach the internet with caution. The Lord is the source of wisdom (Pr. 1:7; 3:7; 9:10), so if a person approaches the internet without the Lord on his mind, and without His wisdom guiding his discretion, he would fall into the category of the fool mentioned in Proverbs 14:16—“reckless and careless.” There are several common temptations and snares on the internet. Christians need to be aware of them and be cautious when they are on the web. Discretion must be used when using Wi-Fi by constantly trying “to discern what is pleasing to the Lord,” while walking in the light, by looking into God’s word and applying it to life (Eph. 5:10).

Christians must be aware of the internet’s modus operandi. The internet mainly functions as a visual stimulant (people look at it). Videos, pop-ups, images, GIFs, and other graphics are all mainstays of the inter-

net because they supply visual stimulation. With that noted, Christians must likewise be aware of how Scripture illustrates the importance of what they see with their eyes and ingest with their minds [Mt. 6:22-23],

Hiram Kemp, another of the school’s students writes in his chapter, “Overcoming Worldliness”:

How can a person know if he or she is guilty of loving the world in the way that John clearly forbids? The New Testament often calls for examination of the Christian’s own life to see if he or she is meeting the standard set by God for the Christian (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5). Each Christian should inwardly ask, “Am I drawn to movies that promote premarital sex, drugs, violence, and filthy language? Do I mimic the ungodly attitudes of famous actors, athletes, or entertainers? ... Am I more concerned with my children getting into college or getting into Christ? Does my heart leap for joy more on black Friday than it does on the Sunday after?” John says that the Christian cannot love the world because the things in this world—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life”—do not come from the Father but from the world (1 Jn. 2:16).

As the reader can see, this lectureship will be a very good study on the subject of sin. There is no better way to spend a January day than studying God’s word and having fellowship with His people! We hope to see you here on January 18-21 for “Do You Understand Sin?” 

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Thanks to all those, especially our alumni, who have contributed \$90 (or payments toward that) in honor of bettye, our retired office manager! We had a great get-together in honor of her work at FSOP and her value to the kingdom of God. The Lord truly blessed the school with bettye from 2000 when she came on board! We appreciate her and look forward to the good that will come through her influence in this next phase of her life. If you have not done so already, and are



bettye at retirement celebration

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What can you give a gal that has just about everything? Why not consider a contribution that keeps on contributing to the kingdom of God? In honor of bettye's retirement, we ask our supporters and potential supporters, especially our alumni to give \$90 within 90 days in honor of 90 (a significant number for those who know bettye). What a great way to honor her years of service to the school! Please write in the memo line "in honor of bettye."

willing and able, you can still make a contribution in honor of bettye, a gift that keeps on giving in the Lord!



Hard working ladies of the South Florida Avenue church of Christ: Left: **Jagie** (new part-time FSOP receptionist); **bettye** (retiring FSOP office manager); **Michelle** (church secretary); and **Kathy** (bookkeeper and new FSOP office manager). They are "more precious than rubies"!