

Bible's Revelation on Sin I

By Arthur Whiting

Arthur Whiting:

Station KZER Friday January 4.

Now we come to the first of four studies on what the Bible reveals about sin as we consider together the subject of the problem of sin. We are living in a day that is characterized by a widespread lack of the sense of sin. Two centuries ago in the days of Jonathan Edwards men and women slipped from their Pew seats to their knees in deep conviction of sin as the Word of God was thundered forth. Now people sleep in church pews or complacently sit unmoved by the presentation of divine truth the old fashioned sense of sin has gone and in its place there is a smug spirit of self-satisfaction. Sin is a word that seems to be missing from the 20th century vocabulary while it does not lie within our purpose to discuss fully the reasons for this great change. We would suggest that a number of factors have contributed to the new situation and in part at least account for it the general acceptance of the theory of evolution the easygoing attitude toward life which does not concern itself with sin the breakdown of accepted standards which leads to an acceptance of lawlessness as a natural part of life the multiplication of the number of those whose lives are comfortably fixed so that they seldom if ever see the ugly sordid and repulsive side of life the loss of respect for the Bible with its authoritative declarations. These things my friends among others have done much to render the people of our day insensible to sin. There is however a sense of sin persisting in a particular form.

We have developed a habit of detaching sin from ourselves and fastening it upon those who we dislike. This is a day when man is expert in the business of transferring responsibility and guilt in time of war. Each belligerent blames the other. Practically every inmate of our penitentiaries feels that he is there because of a miscarriage of justice someone else is to blame. Thus it is that in an age of so-called advancement in culture the hardest task of the Christian worker is to get an acknowledgment of sin from any man. Yet sin exists its fruit is seen in slum and suburb in law court and penitentiary in hospital and in cemetery. Coupled with this fact of an almost universal lack of the sense of sin is the fact that there are two extremes of thinking. First the reality of sin is denied because God is good. That is the position of the deluded followers of a certain Christ denying system.

Second the reality of God is denied because sin exists. Thus the atheist accepts the testimony of his senses in the direction of the earth but refuses to heed it in the direction of heaven. But the truth is that sin is an awful fact. The great tragedy of the universe of which we are apart in the pungent phrasing of Dr. James R. sin is here he says this conscience and universal experience attest the evidence is of its presence are not slight or intermittent. Men may belittle it tried to forget it treat it as a superstition or disease of imagination. But the grim reality asserts itself in the dullest consciousness and compels acknowledgement of its existence and hateful power drug. Conscience as deeply as you may. A time comes when it awakes turn in what direction one will sin confronts one as a fact in human life an experience of the heart. A development in history a crimson thread in literature. A problem for science an enigma for philosophy. So said Dr. James

R. the brilliant Bible scholar of a former generation granting that sin is here as undeniable fact. Many questions flood the mind of the serious thinker and clamor for an authoritative answer.

What is this thing called sin. How did it get into the universe? Why is it allowed with all of its entail of suffering and sorrow? How can its presence with us be reconciled with what we know of God's goodness and love? What is going to be the end of it? Is it here forever? Today we shall attempt to deal with two of these puzzling questions. First how did it get here? Secondly why is it permitted later? We expect to take up the matter of what God says sin really is the first question is then how did sin get here. Where did sin originate. There are some who hold that the two opposing principles of good and evil have existed for all eternity as they always have been present in the universe but such dualism has no warrant in scripture even though it may be said that wrong was always ideally existing wherever its opposite right was found. Let us be sure of one thing since origin was not in God in order to account for the presence of sin in the universe. Some have very boldly charged God with being its author it is true that God in His foreknowledge was aware that sin would be introduced. It is true that God in His eternal plan of redemption anticipated sin with all of its destructive power and made adequate provision against it. But it is not true that God originated sin. He knew it would come but he did not give it birth.

All that the Bible reveals about the in expressively holy character of God forbids our holding. The idea that God originated sin but someone will say what about Isaiah forty five seven and perhaps you would like to take your Bible and turn to it. Isaiah forty five seven where the Lord is speaking and he says I make peace and create evil does not that teach that God is responsible for the existence of sin. At first glance this verse does seem to throw the blame for sin upon God and

believe me it gives us quite a shock but closer examination of the language used together with the setting brings us into the light. The difficulty lies in the translation of the Hebrew word by the word evil the word evil may mean much more than is intended in any single use of it the Hebrew word is making reference not to sin and iniquity but to calamity and adversity things which are the results of sin. The same word here translated. Evil is rendered calamity. For instance in Psalm one hundred and forty one verse five it is rendered adversity in first Samuel. Ten nineteen it is translated grief in Nehemiah two verse 10. It is translated distress in Nehemiah 2 17 and it is rendered by the English word trouble in at least nine passages. Thus if we substitute the word calamity for evil in Isaiah forty five seven and read the setting of the language the difficulty disappears. The Lord is speaking of the calamity which is to fall upon a guilty city and is simply but severely reminding them that the operation of sin falls within the scope of his sovereign government and must always eventuate in calamity. We can also be sure dear friends of another fact sin's origin was not in man. We see so much of sin in human society that we may be persuaded to believe that it is just a part and parcel of human nature something that inherently belong to us from our very creation. There are many who think that sin is a necessary part of our sensuous nature or is due to some limitation of our makeup. But we know it was not in man as he came from the hand of God. Adam was not created a sinner. He became a sinner through choice. We know too that sin was not in God's ideal man. The man Christ Jesus we know further that it will not be in man as he is to be when as a believer he is ultimately glorified and conformed to the image of God's dear son. No my friend's sin is not essential to human nature. Sin is an intruder sin is a foreign agent. Sin is something that has come in to disturb and disrupt. Since this is true then sin must have been introduced from the outside it must have been in existence prior to Adam's participation in it. The Bible witnesses to the fact that sin really had its origin not in

God nor in man but in Satan according to the word of God sin first made its appearance in a spirit being in the heavenly realm. This truth is disclosed in Ezekiel Chapter 28 verse 15 where speaking of the Anointed cherub that covers and undoubtedly this was a superhuman being later known as Satan. It is said in this fashion that was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created to iniquity was found in thee. we know of course that Satan was created in perfection a free moral agent with the capacity of choosing with or against his creator that he exercised his power of choice against God is made clear by the word of God and thus Lucifer son of the morning Satan himself became the first sinner in all the universe as he chose his own course of independent action beyond this revelation that the first sin was committed in heaven by the most exalted of all God's creatures.

The Bible does not take us and therefore beyond this we dare not go with any dogmatism. But the record is clear. Sin entered the universe through Satan sin entered the world through man. Thus the word of God declares by one man. Sin entered into the world and death by sin. That's in Romans 5 verse 12 sin entered says this verse. It was already in existence but it came into human experience through Adam man was the guilty party. It is true that Eve was tempted first and fell but we know she was deceived for in 1 Timothy 2:14 We have this word. Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Adam committed the offence with deliberate knowledge that what he was doing was open rebellion against God's revealed will sin then entered the human realm through the acceptance of evil by the free will of man. This is the big fact of revelation that concerns all of us for because of it all of us were constituted sinners. Now we turn to consider our second question why is sin permitted. Why did God allow sin to enter into human experience?

This is a question that has troubled many sincere souls since it is a question that concerns God's action. It is evident that only God is qualified to answer for he alone knows why he does what he does. God speaks through his word. Thus our only authority is the good old book the Bible. But when we turn to its pages in search of an answer to this question we may suffer some disappointment because we do not find what we expect. There seems to be no clear definite and direct statement that clarifies the situation by that of course I do not mean there is no revelation but simply that what is there is not as patent as our disclosures of other truths. The scriptures however do point to at least three underlying reasons that moved God to allow sin in his universe. Listen carefully now as we name them for you the first reason we believe was that man might derive divine knowledge turn if you will to Genesis 3 verse 22. The third chapter of Genesis and the twenty second verse and the Lord God said Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil. One of the great differences between God and man is that while God may know everything perfectly and eternally men can know only by experience and revelation. Thus it is said of Christ as a human being that though he were a son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered man could never know the difference that God sees between good and evil. Apart from the existence of evil in such a form as to exhibit it's exceeding sinfulness and we believe that God allowed sin to find expression in his creation in order that man might learn what God knows eternally.

A second reason for sin being permitted in God's universe was that God might demonstrate divine hatred turn if you will to Romans chapter 9 verse 22 Romans 9:22 where we read what if God willing to show his wrath and to make his power known endured with much long suffering

the vessels of Wrath fitted to destruction. It is as necessary for God to reveal his wrath against sin as it is necessary for him to reveal his mercy. This verse Romans 9:22 is not teaching that God made some men for the purpose of destroying them but it is teaching us that those who buy their own choices have merited his displeasure are to be exhibitors of God's hatred of sin and God's power in the punishment of it but no creature could ever know of God's hatred of sin and the exercise of his power in the judgment of it unless sin be permitted to operate in the world a third reason that helps us to understand why God permitted sin to enter his universe is that God might display Divine Grace turn if you will to that well-known passage in Ephesians, Ephesians Chapter Two verses seven and eight Ephesians two versus seven and eight that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus for by.

Are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God. God's creation manifested much of the glorious character of the creator his creatures could see his loving wisdom his tremendous power and his great glory. But listen they could know nothing of his infinite Grace no created being could have any idea of God's goodness to the undeserving but the exercise of grace toward the undeserving meant that there had to be objects of grace. And this necessitated the presence of sin that would create those objects the introduction of sin thus brought man into the place of demerit a place where God could exercise his grace on the basis of his son's sacrificial death toward those who deserved only his wrath thus saved by Grace.

Believers are to display the riches of that grace in the ages to come but my friends none of this would at all be possible apart from the presence and power of sin in the world. While in this life of course we may never be able to plumb the depths of this riddle of the universe. It is very

evident that the fruition of God's great purposes for his creation demands the presence of sin. We must lay aside our philosophical difficulties and we must take refuge in the great affirmation expressed in interrogative terms in Genesis 18:25 shall not the judge of all the earth do right. Did you get that shall not the judge of all the earth do right. God knows what he is doing what satisfies God ought to satisfy us. My friends we must learn to leave our wise with him knowing that he works all things after the counsel of his own will. He permits evil only in so far as it serves in the realization of his beneficent purposes. Will you listen to the testimony of Psalm 76 verse ten Psalm 76:10?

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee remainder of wrath. Shout thou restrain. Always remember dear friends that God is long suffering to us word not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Don't ever accuse God of doing the wrong thing in permitting sin to exist but realize that you are a very fallen condition gives God the opportunity of showing his great grace to you as you trust in his son's sacrificial death for you. Let us pray Lord we thank thee for the confidence we have that thou just never make a mistake. We do confess that there is much we do not understand about thy ways with men but Lord if thou do to say that even the wrath of men shout praise the we believe thee Father it is our delight to trust thee where we cannot trace thee so Lord cause Thy Word to lodge in every heart to our good and thy glory for we ask it all in the worthy name of our blessed Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ amen now friends it is time to bid you goodbye for the present but may the joy of the Lord always be your strength as you keep looking up.