

SIN

Many times when we study a topic, we will ask the following questions about it: who, what, when, why, and where? For the purpose of this discussion, we will ask the same questions about sin!

Who sins?

When we consider "Who sins?" we find out why man is so interested in this subject. The Bible answers this question very simply in Romans 3:23, where Paul said, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" Please notice here the word "**all**" is used! Paul here is talking to the church at Rome and telling them that all, including Christians, sin! In 1 John 1:10, we read, "**If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**" Now it is easy to see the seriousness of sin and how everyone is affected by this problem.

What is sin?

If everyone is guilty of sin, what is sin? The Bible defines sin very clearly in the New Testament. In 1 John 5:17, John said, "**All unrighteousness is sin.**" If righteousness describes God, then unrighteousness is just the opposite. So sin is doing the opposite of what God says. In Romans 6:13, Paul encouraged the brethren not to be instruments of unrighteousness, but rather instruments of righteousness. Paul continues the thought in chapter 9, verse 14 where he confirms there is no unrighteousness with God!

When do we sin?

This is one of the most difficult questions to understand about sin. When does one actually sin? To find the answer to this question, we must go to James 1:15. In this passage James said, "**when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.**" So we sin when we give in to desire. This means we are guilty of sin the moment we begin to engage in the sin. We are not sinning by just considering sin. For example, let us say that you are considering robbing a bank. Is it sinful to consider such? It obviously is not good, but it is just a thought in your mind. When you begin to prepare, or actually rob the bank, you have now sinned. So desire does not always mean you are sinning, but it is when that desire is acted upon. However, it is good to keep in mind that some thoughts in themselves are sinful. A person can actually sin by having certain types of thoughts. For example, lusting is a sin which is in the mind. Jesus said, "**But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart**" (Matthew 5:28). Therefore, sin is a result of wrong desire which has been acted upon, or in some cases, desires which are wrong in themselves.

Why do we sin?

Many people today actually believe it is someone else's fault when they sin. We have all heard statements blaming the Devil or even God for our sins. In James 1:13 we read, "**Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God;' for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**" Here we see that God does not tempt man. Then why do we sin? The answer is given in the same passage, James 1:14. "**But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**" As people, we sin because of our own desires. It is our own

human nature that causes us to be drawn away by desire and enticed to give into that desire. It is not even the fault of the devil. The devil may put temptation in our way, but we decide for ourselves to consider the temptations. Then we are enticed. When we give in to the desire we are sinning!

Where do sinners go?

The answer to this question should motivate us to know all we can about sin. In Romans 6:23 Paul said, "***For the wages of sin, is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***" Again in James 1:15, we read, "***and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.***" The Bible clearly teaches that sin brings about death. This death is a spiritual separation from God and eternal punishment. In Revelation 21:7-8, "***He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.***" The righteous will inherit Heaven, but the unrighteous will be cast into Hell (Revelation 20:10)! If we are of God, we will not commit sin, because a child of God is like his Father (1 John 3:9). The one who commits sin is of his father, the Devil (1 John 3:8).