

## The Sin of Man – Part I

By God's grace, I'm going to spend just a couple of minutes to capture some of the prior definitions that the old timers already know, but since we have several new faces, to at least let you begin to absorb the vocabulary and the way that I use words. We began where God told us to begin...In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth. And out of that one verse, Genesis 1:1 which is not there by accident, but by divine intent, we begin to receive the revelation that God is these two things that set Him apart from everything else that has ever existed. He is the only uncreated thing in all of existence, and He is the only self-determined thing in all of existence. That means that all of God's meaning and value is intrinsic within Himself, and the meaning and value of everything else which has ever existed is established and set by this only self determined Being of Genesis 1:1. So when we look for our value anywhere else in life, we will miss our eternal destiny, we will be mistaken and we will wander from the divine intent. We are God determined; not to be ever for one moment self determined.

Out of that flows the revelation of the Holiness of God. He is "other than." He is "other than" anything else that ever has existed or ever will exist. He can't be captured by any model, He can't be captured by any language, He can't be captured by any human brain, He is simply "other than" anything else which has ever existed. That's the revelation that flows out of those two aspects of God. He is also Holy in the sense of being perfectly pure and anything called holy by this Holy "other than" One, God, of Genesis 1:1, is indeed holy. Because He determines the value and the meaning of everything. So, if the Holy One, the "other than" God of Genesis 1:1, says it's holy, it's holy; because it is what He says it is.

We had to even come to a new understanding of what truth is. Truth is not that which can be understood by the human mind, it's not that which can be understood or approached by the scientific method. Truth is what God is. God is truth. So truth is what God is and how God views everything else. Because He gives it its meaning and value after He has created it. So it is whatever He says it is. So in short form, truth is how God views reality. That's to be God determined. Truth is not how I view reality; truth is how God views reality, so every mismatch between how I view reality and how God views reality will, in fact, lead us away from God, and lead us away from our eternal purpose.

The origin of choice. It flows out of love. God is—that's Genesis 1:1. He is love—I John 4:8. Love is relational. Relational requires choice. If one choice is God, then every other choice is ungod or ungodly. So at every moment, every choice is simply a choice of being God determined or being self determined. Love can be thought of in terms of caring, effortful caring, even sacrificial service; but I think in the fullness of the love of God, it's best understood as a passion for oneness. That flows out of John 17:21-23, where He has an absolute burning passion to be one with us. He wants us united with Him, which is salvation. He loves that, but He's not satisfied with that. So the whole progression of the Christian life from that moment on, is to relinquish self determination, become progressively God determined and come into Him which is to abide in Him, which is unity. Not union, but unity as we abide in Him. That's the love of God for us and that's why He will discipline us because He can never be satisfied when any thought, any word, or any deed of ourselves is outside of His divine will and purpose. So it is not to punish us, it is to fulfill His love by bringing us into oneness with Him.

This model, remember, was just to try to take the majestic Holiness of God and break it down into bite-size portions so we could begin to understand and absorb it. Flowing out of Romans 5:20 - "where sin abounds, grace even more abounds." So whatever inner circle you draw of our spiritual and physical existence, there's an outer circle of some aspect of God that will transcend your present circumstance. In regard to death, remember, death is swallowed up in victory because of the life-giving power of God.

There is no death that cannot be reversed with life brought back by the God Who is life and gives life to that which He chooses. So, we can never have any fear of death as a Christian, because the life-giving power of God transcends any aspect of death.

Then there are the three essential aspects of God that we have to digest. This is drawn as a chart, but as Brother Dave and I were having a discussion earlier, I'm going to make a few comments about the chart just to make sure we have a proper perspective. It is an attempt, using the human mind and the human language to bring us closer to an understanding of God; knowing that the transcendent majesty of God will always go beyond our understanding. That's why we trust in God and don't trust in our own understanding because God will always be bigger than our understanding. He is these three things. He's not a pie shape; He is omnipresent. He is infinite. So obviously, no diagram can ever capture the transcendence of God. He is these three essences; but I'll give you the physical model that some of you scientists will know. When I was in high school, we were shown diagrams of the atoms, where an atom was shown as a dot that circled around the nucleus. Well, then you get on into college and you get into organic chemistry and get the model of like an electron cloud where it's never located in any one specific point in time, but thought of like a cloud surrounding the nucleus. And I'm sure there are more models now that come closer and closer and closer. But no model in the scientific realm, or in the spiritual realm, can ever capture the fullness of the truth that's being approached. So, He's not a neat pie-shaped chart, He is these three essences in harmony; not three compartments. He simply is God, he is all of these three things. But the human brain cannot process at that level. The human brain has to get it down to a model that is digestible so that we can begin to understand it, knowing that our transcendent God will always go beyond any model or any verbal description.

Now having said all that, we've been through the first few sessions, dealing with the beginning and coming to a revelation of the Holiness of God. Today, we're going to move on into the sin of man; but as I'll say repeatedly through this session, the sin of man can never be understood until you begin to receive a revelation of the Holiness of God. So we saw that revelation of the Holiness of God is what inspires the fear of the Lord, the awe and reverence of God in us. And we learned from Scripture that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...the beginning of understanding... the beginning of wisdom. So you have no knowledge, understanding, and wisdom except that it be inspired and flow out of the awe and reverence of this Holy God of Genesis 1:1. When you begin to see this Holy, other than God, that truth is what He is and how He views everything else, then you can begin to see that any departure from that is, in fact, sin.

Genesis 28:12 speaks of Jacob's ladder. Now one way of thinking of that is Jesus Christ is the ladder, because He is the one mediator between God and man—between Earth and Heaven. In a focal sense in regard to this series of teachings, you can think about each of the progressive steps as being the next step on the ladder. Now we know in our physical world, don't try to skip steps on the ladder. You expose yourself to great hazard of falling if you try to skip steps. In the beginning – Genesis 1:1 was step number one. That led to the revelation of the Holiness, the Other Thanness of God. Then step three, the sin of man; and after that, the judgment. We don't want to skip any of these steps or else we will be at risk of falling from the divine intent. Now most people will go to any extreme to avoid stepping on the steps called sin and judgment. They're not pleasant for us to look at and we try to avoid them. Now, in the secular world, I once read a quote that stuck with me and it said, "Most people will go any extreme to avoid thinking. I have made an international reputation by thinking twice a week." And to some degree, that's the way we tend to function as Christians. We will go to any extreme to avoid thinking, certainly to avoid thinking about certain things such as sin, judgment, and Hell. In fact, I may develop a

bad local reputation here and elsewhere in the community, because I will insist that we look at sin, judgment, and Hell.

Next poster. Now this is a simple, mathematical expression of (not the new math) but the most ancient of math. This is how God views mathematics. Don't be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. The Holiness of God, we've looked at. Today, we begin to look at the sin of man. The equal sign is the judgment; because if you have the Holiness of God, and plus the sin of man, the judgment will equal the reality of Hell. But if you take the Holiness of God, add the sin of man, and then add the cross of Christ, the cross of Christ, of course, negates the sin of man because the price is paid and you're left with only the Holiness of God and the Holiness of God, judged, is the reality of Heaven. Because that's where God dwells and eternity will be the only thing that will dwell there will be Holiness. So, this in simple terms is God's math.

Now I personally think that the lukewarmness and apathy in the church today is because we don't function in the reality of these foundational concepts. We must know the Holiness of God to even begin to know our own sin and to know God's absolute hatred of sin. And we have to know our sin and the judgment of God to understand the reality of Hell. So, are we going to stay in the sin of man and the reality of Hell? Of course not, because we are under grace. But I do think that the revelation of what we have in the grace of God is only understood to be amazing when we function in the light of the Holiness of God and the sin of man in comparison with that. Simply stated, you will not have a full revelation of what God is, and Who you have in Jesus, if you don't have a revelation of what God is and what you have without Jesus. If we are blasé about sin, we will be blasé about the cross, and then we'll be left with a form of godliness that denies the power of New Testament Christianity. So two things are necessary—to know the heart of God—to know who He is and then to know my own heart in the light of the heart of God. I can't see who I am except by seeing who God is and in that light, see how I compare to God.

Now, I'm going to use a simple illustration here to make the point. We're said to be in darkness. That's how we function in the world, unsaved. There may be a little glimmer of white showing around the margin somewhere because we're all without excuse. All you have to do is look at creation, remember, from Romans 1:18-19 – every man is without excuse; because you look at the divine order, you have to see a divine intelligence. Well, then we get saved; we begin to get a little light. Now we begin to see things a little differently at least in some ways. We have some light, but still much residual darkness. Now unfortunately, this is where many Christians choose to remain throughout the rest of the time on planet Earth. They are saved; they have the assurance of their salvation; but most of the time when they're looking at circumstances, theirs or others, or interpreting world events, they're still looking through the eyes of the world and still seeing through darkness. The whole Christian journey from that point on, is to grow progressively in seeing more light so as to be able to compare the light with what we previously functioned in, which is darkness. The unfortunate part is, this is where most Christians tend to stop. So they are left without that awe of the Divine, without that awe and reverence of this Holy God. They don't really know the magnitude of the love of God for them, because they have refused to progress to look at the magnitude of the Holiness of God.

Now, here is God's intent. This is when we begin to pull these two things apart. And we begin to understand Isaiah 55 when He says, "My ways are higher than your ways. My thoughts are higher than your thoughts. As high as the Heavens are above the Earth, are they higher, and as far as the east is from the west." But see, we as New Testament Christians tend not to pull them apart; so this is a diagrammatic representation that you're to go from just overlap to seeing a little light to seeing that there

are two absolutely contradictory, contrasting worlds. There is no overlap and it goes as far as the east is from the west. I can't stretch my arms to show you that magnitude; I can only say that is the magnitude of it. Here is to worship God a little bit as a little God, while you remain in your self determination, you see, rather than your God determination, which is why we look like the world. That's why the divorce rate is the same among Christians as it is among the world - because we're still here functioning in darkness, though we have our salvation. But we are called by God to go here. And this is where Paul went, you see. This is why Paul could say I live, yet not I, the spirit of Christ in me. There is nothing in my flesh that is good. Nothing. It is anti-God, hostile to God, cannot worship God, cannot understand the things of God, and wants to remain with you in self worship and self determination; rather than every fiber of your being, being yielded to God in God determination.

Then you say, well, but aren't we in the world? Yes, but see, here's the revelation you get and then it comes together like this. Where now every single detail of life you're seeing as God sees; this is now to be God determined. This is to be in the Spirit rather than here, in the flesh. Can you grasp the concept of the model I'm trying to present to you? You're in the world, but you're not of the world because you're not looking at things through the eyes of the world or through the eyes of self, you're looking at them exactly as God does. So, we start lost, then we receive the divine life. We are now in Him, we begin to seek Him. So we seek Him to the point of seeing Him and then see as He sees. This is God determination—not self determination and the reality for most of us as New Testament Christians is we tend to stop here. This is lukewarmness, this is apathy. This is walking in the flesh. This is why we have a form of godliness while denying its power, can you see.

So we looked at the Holiness of God. We looked at His sovereign, majestic, creator, kingship, His divine nature, including His perfect love, His passion for righteousness and His hatred for unrighteousness. You say, could He hate it that much? Habakkuk 1:13 remember – He cannot approve evil, He cannot look on wickedness with favor. It's not that He chooses not; He cannot. Because, how can a God, Who is perfectly pure look on anything different from His own purity with favor, with approval? It simply cannot be done.

Next poster. So, with those preliminary things, let's move on to look at a little more concrete way at this thing called sin. We're going to look at it in terms of four frames of reference. The first is truth as opposed to a lie. Now recall what truth is. Because if you don't define truth in some approximation to what I'm defining it, you will always walk through life, taking lies and regarding them as truth. But the truth is what God is and how God views everything else. That is to be God determined; and only when you're walking in the fullness of that in every aspect of your life, are you giving Him honor as God, rather than honor as a lesser God. Well, since He is truth, then anything contrary to God is a lie. So anything done contrary to God is a lie. So all sin is a lie in one form or another and all lies are, of course, sin.

The next frame of reference—faith versus unbelief. The Bible tells us that we access God through faith, without faith, we can't even please God. We're told that our purpose is to give Him glory, we're to please Him as Jesus always did what was pleasing to the Father. That's how we're to function and without faith we can't do that. So if what we're doing at any moment, any thought, any word, any deed that is not flowing out of faith in this Holy God of Genesis 1:1, is in fact, sin. Because it means either that we're not coming to God or we're trying to come to God by some way other than faith. Now I'm sorry, but either one of those things is contrary to how God views reality, because He can only be approximated by faith, not by our human understanding. That's why Romans 14:23 simply says anything which is not of faith is sin. So sin can be approached in the frame of reference of truth versus

lie, with truth being what God is and how He views everything else; or faith in this Holy God of Genesis 1:1. Now, what we tend to do as New Testament Christians, I'll give you two models. One is you've seen Michael Jackson moon walk. Well moon walking, if you've seen that, he gives the physical presentation as if he's moving forward, it looks to the eye like he's going forward, but in reality, he's walking backwards. And that's what we often tend to do. That's what even I can do as a teacher like I'm standing up here today. I can give the appearance of walking forward while walking backward. That's why the Scripture says, teacher, do you not teach yourself? Don't let anyone even be called a teacher. I may be called to teach, but I'm not called to be called a teacher. Because there's one who teaches and that's the Spirit of Truth that is within me, you see. So, if I'm not applying what I'm saying to my own heart, circumcising my own heart, letting it split truth from anything contrary to how God sees reality, then I am in fact moon walking in front of you today.

The other model is an octopus. If you think of an octopus, remember that an octopus has two defense mechanisms. It squirts out a jet of water and propels itself backward from whatever it's fleeing. And while it does so, it squirts out a jet of ink to obscure vision of the predator trying to capture the octopus. So, if I stand up here and moon walk without letting these words circumcise my own heart, what I'm doing is going backwards and leaving a trail of ink, which is what much of Christianity does. Is there a shortage of books in the world today? Is Christianity going forward while leaving a trail of ink? You see, is that our behavior? Is that my behavior as I stand up here today? If I'm operating in anything contrary to how God views reality, then it may well be. If I'm operating in belief in anything other than how the other than God views reality, then I may well be doing just that.

How about obedience versus rebellion? You see, we like to call it obedience versus disobedience. But in reality, it is simply rebellion. Because when you know that which you should obey and you choose to disobey, is that not rebellion? A willful act to disobey? How would you define rebellion if not that? In Psalms 2:1-3 – in that scripture, the rulers of the world are conspiring against the Godhead, Himself. Let us tear their fetters apart from us, and cast their cords away from us. You see, that's the rulers of the world proclaiming that they will not be God determined. They will not accept limitation based on their own decision making and their own behavior. So cast their fetters away from us. That's what we do anytime we knowingly disobey that which we know God has stated. Sin simply is rebellion against God. Softer words soften the impact, and thus soften the revelation and thus leave us in our apathy and our lukewarmness. But that's what we do. That's the drive in me, to proclaim that self can be self determined rather than God determined.

We do have accountability. James 4:17 – to him who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. Can it get any clearer than that? Now, here's another way we fall down. We are accountable for what we know, but one way of trying to maintain a camouflage, is to insist on not knowing more, because if I know more, I will be accountable. Can you see? But we missed the second part of that, the other side of the coin, which is we are responsible for two things. What we know and knowing more. Knowing more is called hunger and thirst in Scripture. In other words, I Corinthians 8:2 says, the man who thinks he knows does not know as he ought to know. It doesn't say as he can someday know, as he will know after he seeks. He does not know as he ought to know. In other words, all of us ought to know more than we do know. So we're accountable for what we know and accountable for more than we know. Can you see? Because we ought to know more. Because, remember, ignorance is not just a condition, ignorance is a choice. We are ignorant of what we ignore and we ignore what we give a low priority. So if we are ignorant of God, it simply means we have given God a low priority which means we are functioning in self determination.

Now the last frame of reference. I'll have a separate teaching on this as we go on through the series, but I'm going to touch on it now. Judging. Is God the judge, or am I the judge? You see, when we sin, we make certain pronouncements that we tend not to like to look at because we don't like to think that we would make such a determination. But when we say, God says My ways are higher than your ways, and we knowingly sin, what we do is, no my ways are higher than Your ways. My insight is greater than God's insight. My thoughts are higher than God's thoughts. My judgment is better than God's judgment. My preferences take priority over His preferences. My pleasures outrank His pleasures. My timing is better than God's timing. God's authority does not apply to me, or if God's authority does apply to me, I will determine to what degree and under what circumstances.

Now the summary of all that is in the area of our sin, we tend to view God as inferior and subservient to our own self determination. That's to place ourselves in the position of judging God. We proclaim ourselves in that circumstance as our own god. I am autonomous, I am self determined, and I will judge what God is, what He must be, how He must behave, how He must respond, what the timing of Him ought to be. So sin, then, if you look at all those frames of reference becomes anything contrary to God, to His will, to His purposes, to His motivation, to the assignment of glory to Him and to the source of power being Him and anything contrary to how He views reality. Sin is an all encompassing concept that we tend to prefer not to look at. But here's where we're going in this series. When we refuse to look at the magnitude of our sin, refuse to look at the horror of Hell, what we're doing is simply tightening the spigot and refusing to receive the fullness of the revelation of the love of God as New Testament Christians. Because except we see Him as here and us as here, we will forever think the gap between Him and us was only this; we will need a little grace, a little savior, a little cross, and a little love from this God. And we'll view Him as a little better than us instead of the Holy, other than God that He is, you see. But the only way to know the horror of Hell, is to know the magnitude of your own sin and the absolute hatred of that Holy God for anything contrary to Himself. So, if you want to know the love of God in the New Testament, swallow and wallow in the magnitude of His Holiness and the magnitude of your own sin and then you will later come to the revelation of just how amazing the grace of God is and thus, the revelation of the love of God and that's when you'll begin to grow in love because He first loved you, and knowing love by this that He laid down His life for you and knowing the fullness of that love of what He is, what you were, yet what He did...go through the horror of Hell for you. That's how you know the love of God. So, I'm not saying this just to emphasize theological concepts just to satisfy the mind of man; I'm talking about the quickening of the Holy Spirit bringing life to your New Testament Christian life in the New Testament. But let's step on each step, so that we come to the fullness of that revelation of Jesus Christ, Who He is, what He did, why He did it, what He went through, and what that reveals to you and what you will then reveal to the world when you're walking in the light of that. That's when your face will shine and people will ask you, will you please explain to me the reason for the hope that is within you?