

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

Part II: The Doctrine of the Sin

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There are one hundred seventy-four uses of the noun sin (*hamartia*) in the New Testament.

(*Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*, J.B. Smith, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1955, 1965, page 16) Forty-seven of these are singular and are used with the definite article in the Greek text of the New Testament. Even so only two of these, John 1:29 and Hebrews 12:1, have the definite article translated into English in our King James Bible.

I became aware of this when I was prompted to do a word study of the Greek word *hamartia* while studying the book of Romans. I found that when I translated the article before sin rather than ignoring it, as the translators had done, the text came alive and many difficulties and spurious doctrines, such as sinless perfection, disappeared. Oddly, with all of the English translations of the Bible available, I have never found a single English translation that has translated this construction when it should have been translated (I trust there is one somewhere). This has obscured a very important doctrinal truth, a truth I call, *The Doctrine of the Sin*.

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Because of the failure to translate the article, there are few English-speaking people who have ever heard of the doctrine of *the sin*. This is true despite the fact that the apostle Paul used this construction thirty times in four consecutive chapters in the book of Romans, from Romans 5:12 to Romans 8:3. This proliferation might be attributed to the writing style of the apostle except for the fact that he used this particular construction only three other times in just two of his remaining twelve epistles.

Nevertheless, in defense of the translators, there certainly are cases in the translation of any language when a word-for-word translation is not possible. It is certainly allowable not to translate word-for-word when the meaning of the text is not altered by doing so. However the number of uses of this construction in these four chapters suggests something more than Greek usage or writing style. The translators should have recognized this construction to be significant, but they did not. Why they did not remains a mystery. Therefore it has become our responsibility as diligent students of the Word of God to find a plausible explanation for this construction. This can be done by comparing Scripture with Scripture to determine what is or is not lost by the failure to translate the definite article.

As long as we are considering translators and translations, there is another problem that can arise in translation. This is the problem of definitions. Almost every language has words which have more than one definition. This is quite common. Therefore the context in which a word is found is often the determining factor of which definition is the correct definition for that particular word. This means that as we study the Word of God, there may be occasions when the English word the translator selected to stand for a particular Greek word may not be the best

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choice of words. This in no wise impugns the integrity of our English Bible or its translators. It merely emphasizes that we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God.

Returning to the matter of the untranslated definite articles in the King James Bible, as we have suggested, the use of the definite article in thirty-five of these forty-seven references cannot be passed off as the writing style of the apostle Paul, because thirty of these occur in four chapters in the book of Romans, two more in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, one in II Thessalonians chapter two and none at all in the other ten books authored by Paul. It could hardly be said, then, that the use of the definite article (with sin in the singular) can be attributed to normal Greek usage or to Paul's writing style. In addition to Paul's use of this construction, the apostle John used it five times in his Gospel, three times in his first epistle and not at all in his other two epistles and in the Revelation. It was used once by James in his epistle and once by Luke in the book of Acts, and it is found four times in the book of Hebrews.

Consequently a better explanation of the use of the definite article with sin in the singular is that this construction denotes a specific sin as it would in English. It then becomes incumbent upon us to identify this specific sin. What exactly was it? The spiritually logical answer to this question is that it was the sin of Adam, the federal head of the human race. His singular sin was the sin that plunged the entire human family into sin and gave it its sin nature. It is rather ironic that when the definite article is translated in Romans 6:23, this truth is made evident: *For the wages of [the] sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* If we compare the first part of this verse (as we have given it with the definite article in brackets) with God's instructions to Adam, there is an interesting parallel:

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And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [dying thou shalt die]. (Genesis 2:15-17)

It should be obvious that these two portions of Scripture, one in the New Testament and one in the Old Testament, promise death for the only sin Adam could commit. He was under the legal responsibility not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Scriptures tell us: ... *the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression* (Romans 4:15). Consequently we could paraphrase Romans 6:23 to say, *The wages of [the sin of Adam] is death [for him and his posterity], but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. This paraphrase gains authority when we compare it to Paul's statement to the Corinthians: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Corinthians 15:22, emphasis mine).

We have already observed that there were three separate causes for Eve's deception. She saw that the tree was *good for food*, which produced the lust of the flesh; *it was pleasant to the eyes*, which produced the lust of the eyes; *and it was a tree to be desired to make one wise*, which produced the pride of life. Further we have observed that all of the overt sins of mankind are produced by the first two aspects of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and all of the things which man calls good are produced from the third aspect of the tree. Hence the singular sin of Adam has produced in his posterity a knowledge of good and evil (a morality) which is independent of God and in rebellion against God. It is this ill-gotten morality that has produced *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* (Proverbs 14:12). Thus all of the moralistic systems of man, which include all of man's religions, have been

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produced by this singular way (which seems right to the natural way of thinking); but the results of what seems right always produces the many ways of death, which, ultimately, is eternal separation from God.

It was this third aspect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that Paul fought against as he proclaimed salvation by the grace of God throughout the Mediterranean world. It was this third aspect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that produced the *other gospel*, which was preached at Galatia, and which influence Paul fought against in all of the churches of Asia. Notice carefully the language Paul used in his epistle to the Corinthians:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present ... a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well [resist] him. (II Corinthians 11:2-4, emphasis mine)

Paul drew a comparison between the work of the Judaizers in Corinth and the manner in which the serpent had beguiled Eve. The reason for this comparison is the use of the same tactics. The *other gospel* of the Judaizers added the corruption of man's works into the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In essence this is what the serpent did with Eve. He promised her life (from a tree that could only produce death) when he said, *Ye shall not surely die*. Thus he promised her life by a knowledge of good and evil, which could only be obtained in disobedience to and without regard to what God had said. Even so he did not speak to her of disobedience to God, he simply told her that if she ate of the tree she would be like God.

Few people would be fooled into believing they could be like God through the lust of the

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flesh and the lust of the eyes, but the whole religious and ethical world has been fooled into believing it can be like God through the pride of life. This equates to man's knowledge of good. Solomon spoke of it in his Proverbs as *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*. So, like the serpent with Eve, the false prophet speaks of good to promote the doctrines of the evil one:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (II Corinthians 11:13-15, emphasis mine)

These *ministers of righteousness* (then and now) cannot understand that the flesh is not just the overt sins that a man commits; it is also the very best that he can do dependent upon himself and independent of God. Thus it is man trying to be like God by endless, imperfect attempts at righteousness. All of these attempts are proven to be imperfect attempts by the Lord's interpretation of the law to the nation of Israel. The law cannot be satisfied with outward show. The scribes and the Pharisees were full of outward show. Consequently our Lord said: *That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 5:20). The law demands perfection (Matthew 5:48). Therefore it condemns all who try to measure themselves by its perfect standard. No man can be justified by that which condemns him. Thus Paul asked the Galatians:

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:2-3, emphasis mine)

There are only two possible answers to this question: either the Spirit was received by the

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hearing of faith, or the Spirit was received by the works of the law. The truth is, the Spirit was received by the hearing of faith, but we cannot stop there. For if we do we will fail to see what many a moralistic preacher has failed to see. Paul equated the works of the flesh in Galatians 3:3 with the works of the law in Galatians 3:2. Thus the flesh is not always the overt sins that a man commits, but it can be the very best that man can do in an attempt to establish his own righteousness before God by the works of the law.

With this understanding of the flesh, we shall now begin to look at the forty-five uses of sin in the singular with the definite article in the Greek text, which articles were not translated into English in our King James translation of the New Testament. We will add the definite articles in brackets to our quotations so that we may see where they exist in the Greek text. The logical place to begin our study is in Romans chapter five. This was the place where I first noticed this construction in the Greek New Testament; and this was the place where my spiritual curiosity was incited to do a New Testament word search for this particular construction.

Wherefore, as by one man [the] sin entered into the world, and death by [the] sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all ... sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:12-14, emphasis mine)

In this text we see the basis for the federal headship of Adam. When he committed the sin, it was not only charged to him, it was charged to his entire race. In fact it was the only sin that was charged to mankind until the introduction of the law of Moses to the nation of Israel. The reason for this is stated in our text: *but sin is not imputed when there is no law.* This means that

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the men who lived during these twenty-five hundred years needed a Savior because of Adam's sin, and even though they committed all kinds of sins which had their roots in the sin of Adam, the sins they committed were not charged against them because there was no law against them. Even so, they were still condemned by Adam's sin.

In the first two chapters of the book of Romans, Paul carefully established the guilt of both the Jews and the Gentiles. Then in chapter three he asked the question, *What then, are we better than they?* That is, are Christians better than unsaved Jews and Gentiles? Paul then supplied the answer: *No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.* At this point in his argument, Paul changed the pronoun from *we* to *they*. The reason for this is that unsaved Jews and Gentiles are still under sin, but genuine Christians are no longer charged with sin. We have been justified freely by God's grace through faith.

If there ever could have been a man who could be declared righteous before God on the basis of his life and works, God would be obligated to reward that man and condemn all others. But there never could be such a man, because all men are related to Adam by blood (except Jesus Christ, Who was virgin born). Thus there is Scriptural evidence to suggest that Adam's sin nature has been transmitted to all men (from father to son) throughout all generations through the life of the flesh that is in the blood. This is suggested by Paul in his argument to the Gentiles in Athens: *And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation* (Acts 17:26). Since the Scriptures declare that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11), the corruption of Adam's sin has been passed from father to son throughout all generations.

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Therefore we are all born into this world dead in trespasses and in sin (Ephesians 2:5). In this regard, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the resurrection of believers into the presence of God: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption* (I Corinthians 15:50). When our Lord showed Himself alive in the upper room, He said: *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* (Luke 24:39). Finally, at the first resurrection we know that when we see the Lord, we shall be like the Lord (I John 3:2). This suggests that the corruption of our blood will be gone.

Paul continued in the book of Romans to enlarge upon the doctrine of justification by faith in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. The reason men can be justified by the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ is because all men are under sin because of the federal headship of Adam. Contrary to the way men think, the law cannot help man in his dilemma, because ... *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin*. Consequently if there is *none righteous, no, not one*, it is not possible for man to have a proper relationship with God on the basis of law and human effort. This is where the Federal headship of Christ comes in. If one man could plunge the world into sin, then One Man could pay the ransom for man's sins. Therefore God became a man through the virgin birth so that He could be both God and Man; so that He could fulfill all righteousness and every jot and tittle of the law; so that He could die the Just for the unjust, so that man could be redeemed by His one sacrifice for sin forever.

For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the

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obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where [the] sin abounded, [the] grace did much more abound: that as [the] sin hath reigned unto death, even so might [the] grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:19-21, emphasis mine)

As the apostle Paul revealed the doctrine of justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law, it was incumbent upon him to show that the law never justified anyone. It was added because of transgressions till Christ should come (Galatians 3:19). Thus it pointed out the failures that were not specifically named by the singular sin of Adam, but were produced by the singular sin of Adam. This means that the law could never be a means of life but of death. The law simply added to the condemnation of the Jews, who had said: *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.* They should have recognized that they could not keep the law because of their relationship to Adam, but they did not. They should have recognized that they could not keep the law because of their conduct in Egypt before they were delivered by the blood of the Passover lamb, but they did not.

So as the apostle Paul arrived at the beginning of chapter six in Romans, it was his purpose to show the relationship between a believer in Jesus Christ and the sin which had separated him from a proper relationship with the Lord prior to his salvation. So he wrote: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in [the] sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to [the] sin, live any longer therein?* (Romans 6:1-2)

Now if the sin is *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*, it should be obvious that a genuine believer cannot continue trying to establish his own righteousness before God by law works once he has been judicially declared dead to the law and

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alive unto God through faith in Christ. This is the reason Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, to establish justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Further, in his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul declared:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is [the] sin; and the strength of [the] sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:51-58)

It can be seen then that the definite article before sin in the singular in the Romans' text changes the meaning of the text and enables us to know we cannot improve our status with God by law works. However, without the definite article before sin in the singular, certain denominations have sought to prove a believer can live a sinlessly perfect life. This is absolutely false because of the sin nature of man and by the fact that the strength of the sin is the law. So this brings us to the text in the book of I Corinthians (cited above) where it can be seen that no matter how a believer lives his life, he dies in corruption to later be raised in incorruption. It also shows that the sin exerts power over man to make him believe he can have a right relationship with God by the works of the law.

In Romans chapter six, Paul continues with the theme of a co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection of the believer with Christ. This shows the judicial relationship in which the believer resides by the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

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Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we [were] buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man [was] crucified with him, that the body of [the] sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve [the] sin. For he that is dead is freed from [the] sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto [the] sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (Romans 6:3-10, emphasis mine)

This extended portion of Scripture describes a judicial relationship which is the believer's from the moment of his salvation when he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Some have argued that this portion of Scripture speaks of water baptism, but, like the thief on the cross, all believers are not baptized in water. They are, however, all baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ. Even so there is a connection between water baptism and this portion of Scripture, because the believer's baptism in water portrays his baptism by the Spirit of God into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: to walk in newness of life. The newness of life is a walk of faith, because the just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith. So the believer's life is not a life of law works, according to *a way which seemeth right unto a man*, but a walk in the Spirit. Since the Spirit of God caused all of the Word of God to be written, a walk in the Spirit is a walk in the light of the truth of the Word of God.

As Paul progressed through the book of Romans, he added additional information to the believer's knowledge of the sin. Since God views the believer through the blood of Christ and thus in perfect righteousness, Paul admonished the Romans to also do some judicial reckoning: *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto [the] sin, but alive unto God through*

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Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not [the] sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto [the] sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Romans 6:11-13).

If the believer will erase from his memory any concept that he can perfect himself in his relationship with God by the works of his own hands, then he will have overthrown the reign of the sin in his life. He can then allow the love of God and the grace of God to motivate him to ask the question Saul of Tarsus asked on the road to Damascus, *Lord, what would you have me to do?* There is a vast difference in doing the right things out of reciprocal love and thanksgiving than allowing the sin to continue to dominate the mind through self-righteous acts. Thus the believer operates in faith by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and not through a sense of obligation.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith[,] and the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:10-14, emphasis mine)

Consequently there should be no occasion in the life of a believer which should cause him (in a right understanding of his relationship with the Lord) to revert to his former manner of thinking (*a way which seemeth right unto a man*). The believer should ever understand that he is to reckon himself dead indeed unto the sin. Seeing himself in this judicial position, he is to recognize that: *The just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith.*

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Returning to the sixth chapter of Romans, Paul drew a comparison between the believer's former manner of life and his present life:

Being then made free from [the] sin, ye became the servants of [the] righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to [the] uncleanness and to [the] iniquity unto [the] iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to [the] righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of [the] sin, ye were free from [the] righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from [the] sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of [the] sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:18-23, emphasis mine)

In other words, when we were lost, we served the concept of the sin (*a way which seemeth right unto a man*) without giving it a thought. It was our mode of living. Now that we are saved, we have been freed by the ransom paid by the Lord Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. So as we served the sin before salvation, now we should serve the righteousness (the truth of the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ) after salvation. As Paul closes this chapter, he reminds the believer that death was introduced into the world by the sin of Adam, but the gift of God (eternal life by God's grace through faith) is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the first part of the seventh chapter of the book of Romans, Paul describes a woman in two different sets of circumstances. The reason for the use of this woman is to illustrate the difference that death makes. If a woman is married to a man and she leaves him and marries another man, according to the law, she is reckoned an adulteress because her first husband is still alive; but if her husband dies and she marries another man, she is not an adulteress even though she has taken a second husband:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;

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that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Romans 7:4-6)

Paul wrote all of this so that the believer might recognize his relationship to the law. He is dead to it. Since he is dead to the law, he cannot be charged with a violation of the law even if he does something that when he was alive to the law would have condemned him. This is not a license to sin. It is God's judicial reckoning because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the believer's stead. Thus the believer is henceforth counted dead to the law (Colossians 3:1-4).

Even though a believer is dead to the law, he may not always view himself that way. So after the account of the woman, Paul related a personal experience of his. It must have occurred shortly after his salvation when he through ignorance put himself back under the law:

... now we are delivered from the law [through salvation in Christ], that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known [the] sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But [the] sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, [the] sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For [the] sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But [the] sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that [the] sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under [the] sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but [the] sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would

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not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but [the] sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (Romans 7:6-21, emphasis mine)

This was not only Paul's experience, it has been the experience of every believer in Jesus Christ who has erroneously thought: *Now that I am saved, I can live a holy life and keep the law.* This erroneous concept, according to Paul's testimony, came from *the sin that dwelleth in me,* which is *a way that seemeth right unto a man.* So every believer (through a similar experience to Paul's experience when he placed himself again under the law) must come to recognize *that [the] sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*

Finally, spiritually battered and bruised by his experience, Paul began to put the truth of the saving grace of Jesus Christ together with the fact that as a redeemed Jew he was no longer under the law. He knew the law was good and right and holy, but it took his post-salvation experience with the law for him to fully understand his judicial relationship with the Lord:

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of [the] sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:22-25, emphasis mine)

Paul has shown us that the relationship of the believer to the sin is a judicial relationship. When the believer reckons the sin to be dead, it is dead; but if the believer loses his perspective of a relationship of grace and faith, the sin will arise to torment him as it tormented Paul: *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Even so we must remember the fault is not in the law but in *the sin that dwelleth in me.*

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As we come into the eighth chapter of the book of Romans, Paul makes a statement that has been misunderstood by some very great theologians of the past, so that when a perverted text of the Greek New Testament was found, they believed they had a more accurate Greek text, because the last half of Romans 8:1 was not present. Exactly why this portion of the verse had been removed is not known, but the theologians thought it was a more accurate text because they did not know how to explain it. Because of this, they thought the latter part of the verse put forth the false idea that the condemnation of a believer is conditional:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for [the] sin, condemned [the] sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4, my emphasis is upon the removed text)

At this point it is important for us to understand that the condemnation Paul felt from his experiences in the seventh chapter of Romans was not condemnation from God. It was self-condemnation because of his inability to perform the deeds of the law. The innate feeling that he could perform the deeds of the law because of the pseudo-morality received from the sin of Adam was the motivating factor, even though his standing before God had not changed. He was still justified freely by God's grace through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless he had felt obligated to try to perform the deeds of the law, but his failed attempts overwhelmed and frustrated him.

So with regard to Romans 8:1, at some point in the transcription of Scripture, there is a good possibility that a scribe (who must have sincerely believed in the security of a believer) took

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it upon himself to remove *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* from the text. Many years later, when a Greek New Testament (with this corrupted text) was discovered in a monastery in Alexandria and a second copy in a monastery at Sinai, theologians were convinced, due to the age of the documents, that they had a more accurate text of the Greek New Testament. What the theologians and the scribe who first deleted these ten words from this text failed to grasp was the argument Paul had been building from chapters five through eight in the book of Romans. They completely ignored Paul's self-condemnation in chapter seven, and all of this was born of their failure to acknowledge the significance of the thirty occurrences of sin in the singular with the definite article in these four chapters.

Once Paul understood that he could serve the law with his mind, but with the flesh the law of sin, he had the answer to his mournful wail, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Then came the full realization: *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.* He was already dead to the sin if he would just reckon it to be so, because God had reckoned it so from the moment of his salvation. Thus in chapter eight, a free translation based upon what we have learned about the flesh and the law in Galatians chapter three, could read: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after [fleshly attempts to keep the law], but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of [the] life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of [the] sin and [the] death* (Romans 8:1-2).

It is this understanding of equating the works of the flesh with the works of the law which provides the understanding of this verse. So continuing our free translation, Paul wrote: *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did] sending his own Son in the*

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likeness of sinful flesh, and for [the] sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us [not by us], who walk not after [fleshly attempts to keep the law], but after the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4).

Paul was not the only one who had had a problem with the law. The book of Hebrews was written to Jews who had made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, but then they had turned again to animal sacrifices and all of the other rites and rituals of Judaism. It is not strange then that the writer to the Hebrews wrote:

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of [the] sin. (Hebrews 3:12-13, emphasis mine)

Here the writer of the book of Hebrews exhorts the Jews, who had made a profession of faith in Christ, not to *be hardened through the deceitfulness of the sin*, because the sin (a way that seemeth right unto a man) obscures the fact that the law has been abrogated:

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it [the heart] shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:7-18)

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Since the law was abrogated it was incumbent upon the writer to the Hebrews to apprise the Jews who had trusted in Christ of their position in Christ. So he compared the ministry of the high priest with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ:

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away [the] sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9:24-28, emphasis mine)

Thus, through the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed forever any attempts on the part of man to establish his own righteousness before God on the basis of his feeble attempts at law-keeping. Even so, the way which seemeth right unto a man will continue to press man (especially the Jew) to attempt to establish his own righteousness:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against [the] sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (Hebrews 12:1-8, emphasis mine)

At Bethabara, John the Baptist saw our Lord and proclaimed: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John 1:29). This was the first use of sin in the singular

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with the definite article found in the gospel of John. It was also one of the two references (John 1:29 and Hebrews 12:1) to the sin in the New Testament that was translated. Later in the Gospel of John, after our Lord had rescued the woman taken in adultery, He said:

... If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth [the] sin is the servant of [the] sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:31-36, emphasis mine)

Earlier we spoke of the fact that at times the translators may have selected a definition of a Greek word in a text which may not have been the best definition for the word in its context. This portion of Scripture contains such a word. It is the Greek word *poieo*, translated *committeth*. This word's primary meaning is *to make* with a secondary meaning of *to do*. With regard to the first definition, Herodotus used this word (years before the writing of the New Testament) to speak of something that is made (or taken) to be one's own. For example: when a child is adopted, it is made (or taken) to be one's own; or when a woman is taken to wife, she is made (or taken) to be one's own. Here and in I John chapter three this is the better translation of the Greek word *poieo*. So that our Lord said, *Whosoever taketh as his own the sin is the servant of the sin.* This makes a distinction between the believer who may lapse into a legalistic mode, as Paul did in the seventh chapter of Romans, and the religionist who makes a way which seemeth right unto a man to be a source of life. Such men are indeed servants of the sin.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not

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Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh [the] lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. (John 8:39-45, emphasis mine)

Earlier in this confrontation, our Lord had established that the Jews to whom He was speaking were servants of the sin. The failure of the translators, to translate the definite article before sin in the singular in the text about being servants of the sin has caused many a theologian to apply the statement, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*, to all unsaved people. This cannot be true because of the parable of the tares and the wheat.

In that parable both the Sower and the enemy of the sower sowed their seed in the same field. Consequently, as the result of that sowing, we have three classes of people in the world. First, we have the field, which represents all of the unsaved of the world. Second, we have the children of the kingdom, which were produced by the good seed planted in the field. Third, we have the children of the wicked one, which were produced by the tares which were also planted in the field.

This takes us to I John chapter three where in verse four, in the Greek text of the New Testament, we read, *Whosoever taketh as his own the sin also taketh as his own the iniquity: for the sin is the iniquity.* The word translated iniquity is the Greek word for lawlessness. Hence all lawlessness has come from the sin. So in keeping with the parable of the tares and the wheat, John wrote: *Little children, let no man deceive you: [he that taketh as his own the] righteousness is*

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righteous, even as He is righteous. He [that taketh as his own the sin] is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:7-8). Then, in verse ten, John wrote: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever [does not take righteousness as his own] is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. The reference to righteousness in this text is of course the righteousness of Jesus Christ: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21).

Returning to the gospel of John, after being reproached for healing the blind man, our Lord said:

... For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore [the sin, which is yours,] remaineth. (John 9:39-41, emphasis mine)

As our Lord began to conclude his message to the disciples in the upper room, He told them that conditions for them were going to change, and that they would be hated by the world's system:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for [the sin, which is theirs]. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. (John 15:18-23, emphasis mine)

The hatred of the world system toward the believer in Jesus Christ was manifested in the

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stoning of Stephen. Stephen showed the Jews that Joseph was hated of his brethren at the first, but when he appeared before them the second time, he was received of them; he showed them that Moses, who killed an Egyptian when trying to deliver the Jews from the oppression of the Egyptians, was rejected at the first, but when he appeared before them the second time to deliver them from Egyptian bondage, he was received of them; and Stephen showed the Jews that the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected at the first, but He will be received of the nation at His second coming. After that, while being stoned, Stephen said: ... *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not [the] sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60).

We are left with two verses of the forty-five verses that have an untranslated definite article before the noun sin in the singular. The first of these takes us to the first stages of the culmination of the mystery of the iniquity. If you will remember, in our study of *The Origin of Sin*, Lucifer rose up in insurrection against God and attempted to establish himself as God. He convinced one-third of the angels that he could be God. Since that prideful day, God has allowed the devil to control the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the earth. In this regard, the Scriptures declare that our Lord came to destroy the work of the devil. Thus his work is destroyed for each individual believer in Jesus Christ at the moment of his salvation. Despite this, God is going to allow the devil one last attempt to establish his kingdom. This will occur during a time in the Scriptures that is known as the time of Jacob's trouble. This period of time is also known as the great tribulation period. It is the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks, and it will begin when the eighth ruler (Revelation 17:11) over the fourth world kingdom (Rome) makes a covenant

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with Israel for one week (Daniel 9:27), which are the seven years of the great tribulation.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about two events that are left to be fulfilled in God's prophetic plan. They are the coming of our Lord and the gathering of believers into the presence of the Lord in the first resurrection. These events are mentioned by Paul in reverse order. Our gathering together unto the Lord will take place before the seventieth week of Daniel and our Lord will come again to the earth at the end of the seventieth week:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and [the] man of [the] sin be revealed, the son of [the] perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (II Thessalonians 2:1-4, emphasis mine)

At the time of our gathering together unto the Lord, there will appear upon this earth a counterfeit Christ. He is the man of the sin, the son of the perdition. By his signs and lying wonders he is going to convince the unsaved world that he is the Christ. Much of the so-called Christian world will still be on this earth to embrace and worship him as well. These are represented in the parable of the tares and the wheat as the tares. The tares are not wheat, they are bastard wheat. Thus these counterfeit Christians will have been operating in a way which seemeth right unto a man, rather than operating in the saving grace of Jesus Christ:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a [the] lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness [i.e., a way which seemeth right unto a man]. (II Thessalonians 2:11-12)

It is fitting for us to end the consideration of the forty-five references to sin in the singular

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with an untranslated definite article with James 1:15. In the context of this verse, we have the nation of Israel, like so many others in the world, trying to lay the blame for their sins upon the Lord. Most casual readers of Scripture believe God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden as a source of temptation to Adam and Eve, but this cannot be true because James wrote:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and [the] sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (James 1:13-20, emphasis mine)