

SPIRITUAL PRIDE MORTIFIED

One factor which legitimizes our continued designation as sinners (even after we have been separated from Sin through those works of grace which are provided for this very purpose) is the inescapable reality that we "have sinned", Rom.3:23.

Nothing, not the "washing of regeneration" not the "sprinkling of the blood" of sanctification, not the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" although all of these things in one way or another deal with the Sin problem, yet none of these Sin eradicating operations change or alter the fact that we "have sinned". If anything altered the fact that we have sinned, (and that we can fall "from grace" and thereby sin again) then the life, death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ would be rendered unnecessary as it concerns us. Not only have we sinned! If it were not for the Grace of God alone, we would yet be living (and dying) in our sins, for the *potential* of doing any or all of the sinful things which we lived in before our conversion, remains in our fleshly bodies, (see Col.3:5 1st clause) so that if the Grace of God were lost, Sin, we say, would certainly regain its former state of terminal malignancy, despite any efforts which we (in our own human will) might put forth to prevent it.

The Holy Scriptures teach us that "remission of sins" is attainable and sure to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This guaranteed remission comes "through his name". This leads us to the conclusion that if and when, one who has been "justified by faith" is thereafter willing overcome by unbelief, that sin will inevitably return to its former state of terminal malignancy. We say that there is no such thing as benign Sin, it must be terminal or either in remission and one point of this writing is to stress that there is only one possibility of remission which is that one would believe on the name of the "only begotten son of God". The Apostle Paul in 1 Tim.1:15 gives us a most self-humiliating example of spiritual pride mortification, and the Apostle John gives counsel concerning this same matter in 1st John 1:8-10.

What is Paul truly conveying in this verse of Scripture? The essential import of this Scripture verse, (1Tim.1:15 last unit) we say, is not a boast, but is a self depreciating confession by the great Apostle Paul that he is a sinner, saved "from sin". This statement is not an assertion of being saved in sin, seeing as this would have destroyed the foundation of his whole doctrinal system, as well as the whole doctrinal system of the Bible. Sin, (in the sense used in 1Jn.3:9) is thrown into remission in the New Birth. The fact however, that we are saved "from sin" does not change nor alter the reality that we "have sinned" and if we should say that we have not "we make him a liar and his word is not in us". We say that this is the sense which the apostle Paul was intending when he penned these seemingly contradictory words. If we should deny that we have existing in our fleshly bodies the Sin *potential*, then "we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" 1Jn.1:8. If we were without the Sin *potential*, then the counsel given to the "little children" in 1Jn.2:1 would not have been necessary.

Most of us have heard the saying, I'M JUST A SINNER, SAVED BY GRACE. While we ourself do somewhat judgmentally declare, that 99 if not 100% of those individuals who boastfully use this statement, are not saved at all, and certainly not by grace, this saying nevertheless carries merit whenever a certain corrective insertion is added. We should all be willing (by way of honest confession) to acknowledge that, I AM A SINNER SAVED "FROM SIN" BY GRACE. This is what the great apostle Paul was doing here, even though we know by reason of other statements also contained in his personal testimony, (see Rom.8:2) that he had been delivered from the power of Sin. He still however, saw himself, and much more significantly was willing to eternally designate himself as the Chief of sinners. We say that this man was so deeply aware, that only the Grace of God (in the operational mode in which he presents it in Phil.2:13) was responsible for the cessation of sins which had occurred in his life, and that absolutely nothing which sprang from his own will had contributed to this said cessation, and that without the intervention of divine Grace, there would never have been such a cessation, and that without this divine intervention of Grace, grievous and blasphemous sins would have continued to be generated in his own sinful heart, that he was thereby prompted to make such a seemingly outrageous statement. If we had "ceased from sin" entirely of our own volition, this then might void our alleged legitimacy to the designation sinners in the particular sense of this word (sinners) which we are here intending, as well as in every sense of this word.

The form of self-abasement exemplified in 1Tim.1:15 last unit, is one of which our good Holiness people for the most part, seem to know very little, and for which also the great apostle Paul has probably been much ridiculed, at least in the heart thoughts of the more sanctimonious of our people. One way in which "our sins" still exist, (even after they are covered by the blood and thus removed from the sight of God, see Ps.32:1) is in our own memory, and in the memory of others, who were effected by them, and also in the memory of our arch enemy. 1Jn.2:2 may very well be speaking of sins which we committed before our Salvation, nevertheless they are still (in the counsel of God) called "our sins".

Would not the great Apostle Paul have had the wisdom to know, that these words (1Tim.1:15 last clause) could and would be taken hold of, and held "in unrighteousness" by the "unlearned and unstable" those who intended to believe that they are saved in their sins. We say that he undoubtedly did, but he would not keep back from the "elect" anything which was in any way needful for them (see Acts 20:27) in order to try to prevent the disobedient stumbling of those who were divinely "appointed" thereunto, see 1Pet.2:8. We say that this exemplary statement was and is needful for sincere Christians, as a lesson in spiritual pride mortification.

Concerning the present tense statements of Rom. Chap. 7 the common conception seems to be that when we enter chap. 8 we are then completely free of the negative conditions described in chap. 7. This may sound good, but the actual truth is that Rom.8:23 is descriptive of the very same state of bondage as is Rom.7:24.

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Rom. 7:15-20 is difficult, (at least for us) to deal with. It may be set aside easily by putting it in a pre-conversion context. There is however a major problem here. The present tense is clearly and purposefully used. Another somewhat more stressful way out is to make it post conversion, but pre-sanctification. One problem with this is that according to the best of our understanding there could not have been more than three days between the conversion of Paul and his Sanctification, not hardly enough time for such relapses as those described in Rom. 7:15-20 to have occurred. The best that we can render at this present time, is to interpret the word "sin" and also the word "evil" in this particular context as pertaining to physical weaknesses on the order of that which beset the three chief apostles as they failed to "watch" with the Lord in the Holy garden. This concept seems to be indicated in verse 23 of chap. 7. We have a piece titled, THE ADOPTION AND THE ADAMIC NATURE ERADICATION, which deals with these Scriptures more thoroughly.

Even the man Daniel, (possibly the closest thing to a perfect human presentation that we can see in the Scriptures) identifies himself as a *sinner* throughout his ninth chapter, taking a share (unjustly we feel) of the responsibility for the national chastening, (which he describes in this chap.) seemingly on the same level and to the same degree to which he implicates the rest of the nation. Self humiliation.

The Lord Jesus himself became willing to be "numbered with the transgressors" and also to be made "sin" even though he himself never "knew" any sin, and was more perfectly righteous than we can ever hope to be except through him. His purpose also was self-humiliation. If anybody ever had the right to hold spiritual pride it would have been him, but instead he *vicariously* became the very blackest of sinners, personally taking *vicarious* responsibility for every drop of blood which had ever been shed upon the earth.

We say that the planned and implemented work of Salvation which was carried out by the Lord Jesus will never be forgotten, (specifically by reason of the people of God) in the endless ages of eternity, therefore we say that the foundational cause for the plan of Salvation, (sin and sinners) will always have to be

remembered in some sense of the word, in order that the Lord Jesus may continue to receive glory and honour for the unfathomably great work of Salvation which he wrought out for us, which work of Salvation was necessitated by Sin. We are not here implying that the sinful deeds of the elect will be remembered, but only the fact that we had sinned.

This particular sense of the word "sinners" with which we are dealing in this article, will rightly apply unto us, not only throughout this life, but also in the life to come, otherwise the eternal sacrifice of Christ, "for sin", might eventually have occasion to be forgotten.

This article seeks to acknowledge all of the present tense Sin doctrine of the Apostles Paul and John, rightly divided and in its proper perspective, although such form of acknowledgment could bring about our own defamation by those Pharisees who (because of their own spiritual pride) cannot acknowledge such Apostolic doctrine.

Therefore we say, that the cause upon which we are still rightly (in one sense of the term) called sinners is, 1stly, We have sinned, and 2ndly, we would still be sinning except for one thing, (this one thing is not coming forth from our own will) which thing is the Grace of God, the which if it were taken away, the "motions of sins" would again begin to "work in our members to bring forth unto death."

When we think of Paul and Barnabas running into the midst of an idolatrous conspiracy, (these folks were in the preparatory stage of offering idolatrous sacrifice) where they themselves would have been the objects of worship, crying out, Sirs, we "are men of like passions with you" we are then made to wonder how many of our good Holiness preachers would have been willing to have mortified their spiritual pride to such a degree as this in effort to reach the hearts of lost heathen. What Paul and Barnabas were really saying to these people was, the only difference between us and you is, that, you are obeying "the desires of the flesh and the mind" and we are not. Dear friends, we will never reach lost souls by presenting ourselves as being in any way superior to them.

The Apostle James states plainly, that, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are". We say that this is not speaking of righteous passions, (but simply indicates fleshly weaknesses such as the fear which he showed toward Jezebel) and any attempt to make such a construction only wrecks destruction on this particular context. How many would be able to acknowledge that the counsel laid before us in Jas. 4:5 applies to the sanctified as well as to the unsanctified, otherwise (for the sanctified) the additional Grace promised in verse six would not be needed. In 1Cor. 1:2 Paul calls those of the church at Corinth "sanctified". In chap. 3 verse one he calls these same folks "carnal" and (as far as we can see) he makes no exceptions to this charge throughout the rest of this epistle, neither in the second epistle. This charge of carnality was based to a large degree on the fact that they could not receive the "strong meat" of the divine counsel. Neither can we.

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Afterthought... We are not going to apologize for the Apostle Paul concerning this theologically inconvenient assertion made in 1Tim. 1:15 last clause, neither for the Apostles James or John. We realize that such carnal cowering could cost us heavily whenever our eternal reward is measured out. Neither will we acknowledge any margin of error where our own exegetical abilities are concerned as touching things which are so plainly stated. In the difficult situation presented in 1Jn. 1:8-10 as it relates to 1Jn. 3:4-10 we must be able to rightly divide between the two varying senses used in these two passages in reference to Sin. This calls for another article. Unrighteous thoughts are Sin in the genitive state, (sin seed). If they are allowed to germinate in the ground of the mind, they *potentially* will take root in the heart, and "bring forth fruit unto death". This is where self-mortification becomes "the path of life" spoken of by the psalmist, see also Rom. 8:13 last clause.