

What Is Sin?

(by Bob Pulliam)

Sin has taken on quite a wide range of definition through the years. We use it quite freely in our society, and it has lost much of its sting. Shifts in meaning are not the result of the Bible not defining it well. All such things are dealt with in the same way by mankind.

Bible Definition...

The apostle John offers us a very clear definition of *sin*. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I Jn 3:4) To transgress is to step out of line. The Greek word (*hamarita*) means "to miss the mark". Like an archer shooting at a target, we have a target of conduct in the law God has given. When we transgress that law, we miss the target... we sin.

The penalty for sin is death (Rom 6:23). This refers to spiritual death, or separation from God. The only way back to God is for atonement to be made for those sins. This has been accomplished in Christ (and only in Him). To take advantage of His intercession, we must become His disciple and serve God through Him.

Kinds of Sin...

I do not mean by this *mortal* and *Venial*. Such distinctions do not exist in the Bible. They are an invention of man. I refer to sins of commission and omission.

To commit a sin is to do something that the Bible has forbidden. We readily recognize this concept from our childhood up. The Bible lays clear responsibilities upon us, and we must act as we have been taught by God's word.

A sin of omission is to omit doing what God has commanded. When God says to do something, and we do not carry out His command, we have sinned. Saul committed just such a sin in I Samuel 15. He was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but he spared the king and some of the flocks. He did not do as God had said.