

5. Sin is inevitable for a Christian. (See our tract on the Book of 1 John for a more complete explanation on this)

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And IF any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1).

What is the Apostle John's purpose to writing these things? (answer above)

- a. That you may sin
- b. That you may NOT sin

Also note that 1 John 2:1 says "if," not "when" (underlined and capitalized above). Let me ask you a couple of questions:

1. "IF I have a car wreck today, I hope not to get hurt." Is this car wreck:
  - a. inevitable
  - b. a possibility
2. "WHEN I drop a ball, it will fall to the ground." Is the law of gravity:
  - a. inevitable
  - b. a possibility

Likewise, 1 John 2:1 shows us clearly that sinning is a possibility in a Christian's life ("IF any man sin..."), but not an inevitable event (not "WHEN any man sin..."). 1 John 1:8 shows us that sinning is inevitable in a sinner's life (before confession and salvation).

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# Faith That Saves From Sin

by Dr. John Duncan, Th.D.

## The Faith That Saves and Delivers From Sin



While wandering through the wilderness, the children of Israel made a deadly mistake that caused millions to perish, except for Joshua and Caleb. They believed in an evil report:

"And they brought up an EVIL REPORT of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel,

saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Num. 13:32-33)

What separated Joshua and Caleb from the rest of the multitude that so displeased God? It was their faith, as seen by their "faith-full" report:

"The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not." (Num. 14:6-9)

### Whose Report Will You Believe?

UNBELIEF in God's promises (and BELIEF in a lie) kept the Israelites from going into the Promised Land, and UNBELIEF will keep many today from entering into Heaven. See Heb. 3:19.

Are you a grasshopper in your own sight? Let's take a survey. Please answer True or False:

- I am a "sinner saved by grace."
- I can not live as God wants me to, not even by the help of God.
- I can not be righteous by the grace of God, because "there is none righteous, no not one."
- On this side of Heaven, I will always fall into temptation and sin.
- Sin is inevitable for a Christian.

If you have answered "true" to any of the previous 5 questions, you have been sold the "evil report" that you are a grasshopper, and that sin is the "giant in the land" that you cannot overcome, not even by the grace of God. For an explanation of the correct answers, see the end of this pamphlet.

The fact that there were giants in the land was never disputed by Joshua and Caleb. Their faith was in their God's ability to give them the victory. They said, "If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us."

The children of Israel already had a promise: that God would give them victory if they possessed the land. In the New Testament, Christians have already been given a promise: that God will give us victory if we place our faith in Christ. *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* (1Jo 5:4)

Jesus himself told us in John 8:32-36:

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*

In the above passage, we can note that:

Not all truth will set you free, but only the truth you KNOW. What will you be set free from? The context makes it clear: free from sin! Jesus came to set us free from sin.

### Salvation by Faith

We are saved by FAITH, but what are we saved from? Look at the following verse:

*Mat 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."*

If it is BY FAITH, you must believe that God can save you FROM (not IN) your sins. If you do not believe that it is possible to live free from sin by the grace of God, you won't.

Let me give you an example:

Johnny's parents always tell him, "You are no good, you are a failure, you will never amount to anything, you can't do right, you are always wrong, you are messed up, you are stupid, you are an awful mistake, you are evil."

What will this upbringing do to Johnny? He will most likely grow up to be a failure, because he does not believe that he can do anything right. No doubt this little boy is growing up in a verbally abusive home. Nevertheless, many today are in spiritually abusive churches. Let me draw the spiritual parallel:

The pastor says, "You are and always will be a sinner, you are a mess, you are going to fail, you will never be able to obey God, you will always sin in thought, word, and deed, you are only human, it's prideful to say that you can live holy by the grace and help of God, etc."

Rom. 3:10 cannot be a universal statement ("no one" in the whole world) since Zachariah and Elizabeth were both "righteous before the Lord, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6) There were also other "righteous" people in the Bible.

Let's put Rom. 3:10 in its rightful context. What are some other characteristics of those referred by "none" righteous?

- there is none that understands
- there is none that seeks after God
- they are all gone out of the way
- they are all unprofitable
- there is none that does good
- their throat is an open sepulchre
- they are deceitful with their tongues (liars)
- their words are full of cursing and bitterness
- their feet are swift to shed blood
- they bring destruction and misery wherever they go
- they do not know the WAY OF PEACE (Jesus)
- they do not fear God

If you fear God and seek after God, you do not even qualify to be included in the above passage, because it says that "there is NONE that seeks after God." Clearly, Rom. 3:10 is referring to unbelievers.

Let me give you an example:

Annie came to teach in the afternoon to find that no one had done homework, no, not one.

Does this mean the whole school? Does this mean the whole world? NO! I'm referring to a certain group of people. You can tell by the context.

4. On this side of Heaven, I will always fall into temptation and sin.

There is a process leading up to spiritual death described in James 1:14-15.

1. Temptation
2. Drawn away
3. Enticed
4. Lust conceived
5. Sin begun
6. Sin finished
7. Death

Every man is tempted -- even Jesus was. But no one has to fall into sin. The devil may interject an evil thought in our heads, but if we bring every thought captive to Christ, we have not fallen into sin, but we have victory over sin! A preacher said, "you can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."

doctrine that keeps you in bondage to unbelief. The Bible says, "*Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*" (Pro. 19:27)

You must die to self, believe in Him, and let Him live through you. Obeying His commandments will then flow naturally as fruit grows from a branch that is attached to the vine. God is faithful, who will deliver you from your bondage of sin.

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### Answers to the quiz:

1. I am a "sinner saved by grace."

This is a cliché used in many churches that can not be found in the Bible. The Bible repeatedly calls Christians "saints." Here is a small fraction of those verses: Acts 9:32, Rom 1:7, 15:26, 16:2, 16:15, 1 Cor 1:2, 6:1, 14:33, 16:1, 2 Cor. 1:1, 8:4, 9:1, 9:12, 13:13, Eph 1:1, 1:15, 1:18, 2:19, 3:8, 4:12, 5:3, Col. 1:2, etc. The Greek word for "saint" is *hagios*, which means, "sacred, pure, morally blameless, consecrated, holy." To say that you are a "sinner saved by grace" is to degrade God's work on the cross. Perhaps the only time where it would be appropriate to refer to yourself as a "sinner" (or a worm, or dust, etc.) would be for humility's sake, but never to describe your current lifestyle as a Christian. A more Biblical description of Christians would be "saints by the grace of God." I would never name my son "Loser Duncan." Why should we degrade the children of God?

2. I can not live as God wants me to, not even by the help of God.

The Bible says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil 4:13). The classic follow up question is, "can I walk on water?" The answer is, "you can, if God told you to" But He told us to live holy lives in the Bible, therefore we can accomplish this through Christ. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim 2:19), "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14), "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14), "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 1:8), "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb 5:9), etc.

3. I can not be righteous by the grace of God, because "there is none righteous, no not one."

The above verse is being taken out of context. Let's see the whole passage.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. 3:10-18)

If that is what you believe, you will only have the faith to always be a sinner. No wonder you are always failing God! "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Ro 10:17). You will not have the faith necessary to break free from sin if you do not believe in God's Bible promises to deliver you from all sin. You are being taught that you are a "grasshopper," and that "there are giants in the land" (sins) that you will never overcome, not even by the grace and help of God. This is an awful false doctrine because it keeps people in bondage to a life of sin.

The Bible says that you CAN live right, you CAN be free from sin, you CAN live holy, you CAN obey God, you CAN keep His commandments... that not of yourself and not of your own works (so we can't boast), but by the help of the Holy Spirit, by the power of the blood of Jesus, by the new nature that God puts in the new believer, you CAN be pleasing to God and live a life of victory.

When you say that you can not stop doing evil, not even by the grace of God, you are nullifying the power of the grace of God and the blood of Jesus Christ. You are saying that Jesus does not have enough strength to help you not to lust, lie, steal, curse, and murder. In essence you are making Jesus weaker than your flesh and the power of God smaller than the power of sin. Your heart is full of UNBELIEF in God's strength to help you not to sin. You are boasting in your ability to keep sinning and still call yourself a "Christian." This is an awful theology. If Joseph believed that he could not avoid sin, he would have committed adultery with Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:12). Instead, Joseph, full of faith and by the grace of God ran from sin as he said, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

### Bible Promises:

**Pr 23:7** "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*"

Do you believe you are a failure? You will be. Do you believe that you CAN do all things through Christ? Then you can. I am not saying to believe for something that is not in the Word of God, like in "The Power of Positive Thinking." You can't believe that you are a successful business man and make it happen. However, I am saying that we can and must believe in God's Promises given in the Bible.

Let's look at some Bible promises that we must BELIEVE in order to obtain:

**Titus 2:11-12** "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*"

What does the grace of God do?

- brings salvation
- teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: to say "no" to sin by the grace of God.
- teaches us to live "soberly": marked by seriousness, gravity, or solemnity of conduct or character, marked by circumspection and self-restraint.
- teaches us to live "righteously": morally upright, without guilt or sin.
- teaches us to live "godly": god-like, or Christ-like.

When?

- in this present world: not in Heaven after you die.

**1 Cor. 10:13** *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

According to the above verse, will God allow you to be tempted to such a degree that you are unable to say "no" to sin?

- a. yes
- b. no

According to the above verse, what attribute of God will not let you be tempted above what you are able?

- a. His faithfulness
- b. His unfaithfulness

To say that sin is inevitable is to slap God by calling Him unfaithful. This is such an affront to the character of God.

**Romans 6:1-2, 14-15** *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? ..... For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid."*

Therefore:

1. Should you sin [transgress / break the law of God] because you are not under the law anymore, but under grace? GOD FORBID!
2. Now that you are saved, should you go on sinning because of the grace of God? GOD FORBID!

Be HONEST and answer these questions:

1. Do you believe that the HOLY Bible, which was written by HOLY men, inspired by the HOLY Ghost will teach you to obey the commandments, or disobey them?
  - a. obey
  - b. disobey
2. Who do you believe would tell you to expect sinning after you are saved?
  - a. God
  - b. the Devil
3. Do you believe that the HOLY Bible, which was written by HOLY men, inspired by the HOLY Ghost will teach you to live HOLY or UNHOLY?
  - a. holy
  - b. unholy

4. Who do you believe would give you excuses for sin?

- a. God
- b. the Devil

If you are being taught that you cannot cease from sin by the grace of God -- you'd better RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! The Bible says that this teaching marks the false prophet. READ IT FOR YOURSELF in 2 Pet. 2:14!

What did Jesus teach? *"Go and sin no more!" (John 8:11)*

What did John teach? *"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:6-10)*  
The Bible teaches that *"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." (1 John 3:10)*

Can't you see why *"without faith it's impossible to please God?" (Heb. 11:6)* God wants us to soar like the eagle, living in the victory that only comes by believing in His promises to help us and to deliver us from sin. Anything less than this is UNBELIEF! If you do not believe that God has enough power, willingness, goodness, and faithfulness to keep you from sinning, you won't experience this victory. That is why SALVATION is BY FAITH. You must believe in order to obtain the promises of God. No wonder it has been said that "unbelief is the mother of all sins."

I realize that it is impossible for the carnal mind to accept the possibility that one may live free from sin. However, Christianity is a supernatural religion, and we must rely on a supernatural God in order to live holy. If living holy was something that we could do in our own human strength, Jesus would not have told Nicodemus that he needed to be "born again." How can we live free from sin? The Bible says that *"For it is God which worketh in you BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO of his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13).*

Only through Jesus can you live righteously. That is what separates Christianity from other religions: Jesus is the only one who came to save us FROM our sins - not Joseph Smith, Buddah, or Muhammed. Therefore people in other religions will always sin, because the blood of Jesus never purifies their heart through faith. (Acts 15:9)

### The Way to Victory and Freedom

We must believe in God's promises in order to obtain victory in this life. How? The Bible says, *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:11)* The word reckon (Gk. logizomai) means, "to estimate, to conclude, to suppose, to think." The way to living free from sin is through dying to sin by faith.

*"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lu 6:46)*  
*"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)*

Friend, God has delivered many from sin, and if you will believe, He will set you free from that one besetting sin that you so struggle with too. Stop listening to false