

The Law of Sin and Death

<https://totalhealth.bz/spiritual-health-sin-death.htm>

Introduction

We shall start with a little story. Whether true or not, we don't know, but share it to make a point:

- A. Parents of a young boy who got out of the habit of attending worship on Sunday sent their son with another family.
 1. When he returned, his mother asked, **“What did the preacher preach on?”**
 - a. The son replied, “Sin.”
 - b. She then asked, **“What did he say about it?”** to which the little boy replied, “He is agan it.”
 2. We need to ensure that **our children** worship God **and** that we set the example by **also** doing it.
 - a. The lesson the boy heard was about sin.
 - b. The boy said the preacher was **against it**, as he should be, but unfortunately, there is a **lot of misunderstanding** and **false teaching** about it.
 - 1) We're talking about teaching that results in hopelessness and vain efforts to **justify oneself** as **living above sin** to **avoid** the feeling of hopelessness – to have some semblance of spiritual security.
 - 2) We're talking about teaching that has resulted in a **negative** view of the Lord's church.
 - b. The misunderstanding may have originated from the principle of *sin and death*.
- B. The concept of "***The Law of Sin and Death***" is primarily derived from the apostle Paul's writings in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Romans.

1. This phrase...**encapsulates** the spiritual principle that sin results in death, both **physical** and **spiritual**.
2. And it highlights the inherent **fallen** nature of humanity due to original sin.

Main Points

- I. **Biblical Foundation**
- II. **Theological Significance**
- III. **Redemption through Christ**
- IV. **Practical Implications**
- V. **God judges when the consequences of sin result in death**
- VI. **Concern for the Consequences of Sin**
- VII. **Why the Consequences of Sin Matter**
- VIII. **Can There Be Too Much Concern for the Law of Sin and Death, or shall we say, for the consequences of sin?**

Body

- I. **Biblical Foundation for discussion of “*the law of sin and death.*”**
 - A. The *law of sin and death* is an **Old Testament** concept.
 1. But references to sin and its consequence of death are found throughout Scripture, beginning with the earliest passages in Genesis (cf. Genesis 2:17).
 2. The Law was **holy, just, and good** (Romans 7:12), but, because man cannot keep God's original Law, that governed the people of Israel, the **result** is only ***sin and death*** for those who were under that law, **or seek** to be today.
 - B. The *Law of Sin and Death* was first introduced in Romans 8:1,2, where Paul writes, **Rom 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the*

*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from **the law of sin and death.***

1. This passage contrasts **two opposing laws**: the liberating law of the **Spirit** and the condemning law of sin and death.

- a. The latter is rooted in the **narrative of the fall in Genesis**, where Adam and Eve's disobedience brought sin into the world, resulting in death (Genesis 2:17; 3:19).
- b. Adam and Eve's sin resulted in death (*separation*) that day, just as God promised. (not phy or *spiritual* death).
- c. We are talking about separation from the Garden of Eden.
 - 1) This is where they had access to the *tree of life*.
 - 2) Because they **lost** access to the *tree of life*, they were doomed to die **physically**, along with all their descendants, with some exceptions.
- c. Thus, there is a biblical foundation for *the law of sin and death*.

B. The law was not given to impart life but to reveal sin and direct individuals to Christ.

Gal 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

1. According to Galatians 3:21, if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would have come from the **law**. Gal 3:21b *"...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

2. Instead, the law serves as a guide to show our shortcomings and lead us to faith in Jesus Christ, **emphasizing** that salvation is by **grace** through **faith**.

II. Theological Significance

- A. Theologically, the *Law of Sin and Death* underscores the universal human condition of **sinfulness** and the inevitable consequence, which is death.

Romans 5:12 states, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and **death by sin**; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*"

1. This passage highlights the transmission of *sin and death* from Adam to all humanity, emphasizing the **impact** of the fall.
2. Paul further elaborates on this principle in Romans 7, where he describes the *internal* struggle against sin.
 - a. He writes, Rom 7:18 *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...* "
 - b. This struggle illustrates the **power** of the *Law of Sin and Death*, which holds people captive to sin despite their desire for righteousness.

III. Redemption through Christ

- A. While the *Law of Sin and Death* reveal humanity's dire state, it also sets the stage for **Jesus Christ's** redemptive work.

Romans 8:1-2 proclaims, "*There is therefore **now no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me **f r e e** from the **law of sin and death**".*

B. Through His sacrificial death and **resurrection**, Christ fulfills the righteous requirement of the law and offers believers freedom from the **bondage** of *sin and death*.

1. This liberation is further explained in Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*".
2. The *gift of eternal life* through Christ **contrasts** with the **wages** earned by sin, highlighting the grace and mercy of God in providing a means of salvation.

IV. Practical Implications

A. **Understanding the *Law of Sin and Death*** has practical implications for Christian living.

1. Believers are called to live by the Spirit, as Paul exhorts in Gal. 5:16, "*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*".
2. This involves a **daily commitment** to resist sin and pursue the **goal** of becoming like Christ and of reaping the eternal reward.

B. The recognition of this law promotes **humility** and dependence on God's grace.

1. It reminds us of our need for a Savior and the **ongoing process** of sanctification, as we are transformed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

2 Cor. 3:18 *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.*

2. This process is **not instantaneous** but **involves** daily growth, repentance, and spiritual renewal.

V. God judges when the consequences of sin result in death

A. Man must not get involved in this process (has no equipment).

B. The determination of **when** the sins of *children*, who reach the *age of accountability*, result in death, rests with **God**.

1. We understand this – brethren agree....

2. This principle similarly applies to *Christians* who sin.

a. But on this, brethren do not agree.

b. Some insist that **any** and **every** sin result in spiritual death.

3. But asserting that **all sin equates to death encroaches** upon God's role as **Judge**.

a. **Samuel 16:7** states that God judges by one's intentions and character.

1) It reads, *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

2) “This means God judges based on internal character, motives, and spiritual state **rather** than outward appearance, social status, or human achievements.”

b. While humans focus on **visible** traits, God evaluates the **true, hidden intentions** of a person's inner self.

1) We don't have the **equipment** to do the job of judging the hearts of men.

2) And we certainly are not authorized to **change** God's word regarding sin and grace, as some do, making ***Christ's law*** "*The law of sin and death.*"

B. Our lives are shaped by a series of choices, not just **one** action.

1. This was true for the Israelites addressed by Isaiah.

(59:2): *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

2. God's judgment...was based on their **ongoing rebellion**, rather than a single deed.

a. The **context** shows their rebellious and impenitent state that led to God's judgment.

b. Unfortunately, we have brethren who **ignore the context** and misapply this passage in their teaching that **any** and **every** sin one might commit results in instantaneous loss of fellowship with God.

1) And so, **these brethren see** a person who has committed a sin, any sin, no matter what category or the general character and relationship with Christ, as being **spiritually dead, disinherited, having no hope** until the sin is **learned** of, **repented** of, and **confessed**.

2) That means they must **think** there is **no** sin in their life, at all (which is ludicrous) if they have any confidence of being in God's grace.

3) Now, imagine the difficulty of getting someone who believes this to see he is **wrong** on some biblical matter, or even that he is **guilty** of breaking man's law on some rather insignificant matter, like not

getting slowed down to the posted speed limit before you pass the sign?

We could go on and on listing **hundreds** of things of this nature that show the perfectionist's view to be a *hopeless* one.

VI. Concern for the Consequences of Sin

A. A healthy concern for the consequences of sin is not the same as living in **panic, shame**, or constant **self-condemnation**.

1. In Scripture, "*fear of the Lord*" often describes a **reverent awareness** that God is holy, that our *choices matter*, and that sin is not something to be considered harmless.

Prov. 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

2. Because the "*law of sin and death*" describes the **real damage** sin brings, believers benefit from taking sin **seriously** while also holding securely to **God's mercy** and the liberty we have in Christ.

Eze 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

- a. Some insist this passage teaches that **any** and **every** sin results in spiritual death.
 - b. But the apparent teaching is that each person is responsible for his **own** sin, and **not** that of others.
3. The **rules, statutes, and laws** set forth in the New Testament are intended to benefit us—following them

offers direction for a *fulfilling life*, while ignoring them can lead to ongoing difficulties.

- a. **Deut. 28:1-68** provides a comprehensive list of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- b. Participating in activities that are advised against by God (sin) will result in problems and difficulties throughout life.

VII. Why the Consequences of Sin Matter

- A. Sin is not merely a private mistake; it produces real and negative outcomes in daily life.
- B. Scripture **repeatedly** connects sin with **loss, corruption, and separation**; not because God is **harsh**, but because God tells the truth about what destroys His good **creation**.

Consequences of sin matter because:

- **1. Sin damages fellowship with God.**
 - **Isaiah 59:2** describes sin as a *separating barrier*; **unconfessed known** sin dulls the conscience and disrupts prayerful intimacy.
 - Paul tells men to be **good to their wives** so that their *“prayers be not hindered.”* (... sins hinder prayer.)
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 - Consequences of sin matter because:
- **2. Sin brings slavery and inward conflict.**
 - **Romans 6 and 7** portray sin as a master that *enslaves* and produces frustration, disappointment, and defeat.
- Consequences of sin matter because:
- **3. Sin spreads outward into relationships.**
 - What begins in the heart often becomes **words, habits, and harm** that affects family, community, and even future generations.

- Consequences of sin matter because:
- **4. Sin has an endpoint: death.**
 - a. Romans 6:23 summarizes the “*wages*” of sin as *death*, meaning that sin, left unchecked, moves toward **destruction** rather than **life**.
 - b. For that reason, a **healthy concern** for consequences functions like a warning light: and a thing called “conscience” comes into play - it calls a person to turn back while there is time and opportunity, but if you fail to heed its warning, it eventually stops working for you. (seared conscience)
 - c. The goal is not **despair** but **repentance** (a change of mind and direction) and renewed trust in God’s promise that “*there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1).

Last...

VIII. Can There Be **Too Much** Concern for the Law of Sin and Death, or shall we say, for the consequences of sin?

- A. Is it even possible to be **overly concerned** about sin?
 - 1. **Concern** becomes unhealthy when it shifts from conviction to condemnation, a crushing sense that God has rejected you, leaving you with no hope.
 - 2. Paul’s contrast in Romans 8:1–2 is important because the “*law of sin and death*” is **real**, but it is not the final authority over those who are “*in Christ Jesus*” and who “*walk in the light*” (1 John 1:7).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

One **can** be overly concerned about one's sins.

This is true...

1. When fear replaces faith.

If your main motivation is **fear** and **panic** rather than **love** and **trust**, you might be seeing God as a **taskmaster** instead of a Father (compare 1 John 4:18 on fear and love).

One can be overly concerned about one's sins:

2. When *obedience* becomes *self-salvation*.

If keeping rules feels like the way you “**earn**” acceptance, you are drifting toward legalism rather than grace.

You can be overly concerned about your sins:

3. When you judge yourself (and others) beyond how Scripture teaches us.

- a. Looking upon every failure as proof of fall from grace encroaches upon God’s role as Judge.
- b. As noted earlier, God *looks upon the **heart*** (1 Sam 16:7) and calls believers to discern with humility.

B. A thoughtful approach, grounded in biblical teachings, involves acknowledging the **seriousness** of sin while **focusing** even more on Christ.

1. The Bible teaches that sin results in death, but it also promises **life** and freedom through the Spirit.

2. In practical terms, this includes:

- a. Honest confession, promptly turning away from sin when you notice it.
it includes...
- b. Relying on God's grace and through Christ's blood to **continually clean** you of **all** sin as you "*walk in the light*," **instead** of continually punishing yourself.
 - 1) Or worse, **denying your sins** – denying certain things are sinful unless they are willful, etc.
 - 2) This amounts to disobedience in **failure to confess them** as **1 John 1:9** demands.

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness."*

- 1) Sadly, brethren who deny certain sins are sins are doing exactly what this passage is teaching against.
- 2) They have adopted the idea that one can **always** know **when** he sins, that sin is **always a choice**, and that the **will** must be involved – essentially denying there is such a thing as sins committed in ignorance, which **Lev. Ch 4** and **5**; and **Numbers 15** clearly teach.
3. Growth in holiness is real, but it is a work God completes in His people over time as they "*walk by the Spirit*" and remain rooted in the truth of the gospel. (Galatians 5:16)

Conclusion:

- A. In summary, the *Law of Sin and Death* is a fundamental biblical doctrine that reveals the consequences of sin and the **necessity** of Christ's redemptive work.
- B. The *Law of Sin and Death* serve as a **constant** reminder of humanity's need for a Savior.

1. It underscores the fact that, on our own, we are **incapable** of overcoming the power of sin and its consequences.
 2. This realization points us directly to **Jesus Christ**, whose redemptive work **provides the foundation** for our salvation, new life, and hope for a home in heaven eternally.
- C. After initial salvation, the *Law of Sin and Death* should not come into play because we are in the **ongoing process of sanctification**.
1. *Sanctification* means **set apart**, but this place where God puts us can be considered to be a transformative journey through which believers are continually shaped into the likeness of Christ.
 2. As stated in 2 Cor. 3:18, we are being *changed from glory to glory*, reflecting Christ more fully as we develop.

2 Pet. 3:18a *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*
 3. This process is **not instantaneous** but involves daily growth, repentance, and continual spiritual renewal.
- D. Understanding the *Law of Sin and Death* keeps believers **humble** and reliant on God's grace, as it highlights our **ongoing need** for Christ's saving power and pushes us to **continuously** strive to become more like Christ.

Invitation

If you are past the age of accountability and not "*in Christ*," walking in the light, the Law of Sin and Death is a **frightening matter**, but you can **obliterate** that fear.

If not a Christian - Obey God's command to be baptized "*for the remission of sins.*"

If you are a Christian and have not been faithful, resolve right now to change that.

We can pray with you for God's forgiveness and his help in overcoming the troubling issues in your life.