

# THE PLAGUE OF ALL PLAGUES

## “THE HEART”

The Law of God is vindicated in God’s condemnation of the sin of man.

*“What prayer and supplication so ever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man **the plague of his own heart**, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)” 1 Kings 8:38-39.*

*By Pastor Del Wray*

Sin is the “plague of plagues”, or the just vindication of the Law of God, and no less just accusation and condemnation of the sin of man.

Sin is the transgression of a law, yea of a good law, yea of God's law. Sin presupposes that there is a law in being, for where is no law there is no transgression Romans 4:15. But where there is sin, there is a law and a transgression of the law. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is a transgression of the law I John 3:4. That this is the sin, the plague intended in the above verse 1Kings 8: 38-39 I've chosen to touch upon in this writing is apparent from Romans 7:7.

“Now the law not only forbids the doing of evil, whether by thought, word or deed, but also commands the doing of good. So to omit the good commanded is sin, as well or ill as is the doing of the evil that is forbidden. Against the fruit of the Spirit there is no law, but against the works of the flesh for the antithesis holds there is law, for they are all against the law, as the Apostle tells us Galatians 5.19-24. Whatever, then, transgresses the law of God, in whole or in part, James 2.10 is therefore and therein a sin, whether it breaks an affirmative or a negative precept, whether it is the omission of good or the commission of evil.” The quotation is from *Ralph Venning's book, The Plague of Plagues.*

In general, sin is the worst of evils; the evil of evil, and indeed the only evil. Nothing is so evil as sin; nothing is evil but sin. As the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, so neither the sufferings of this life nor of that to come are worthy to be compared as evil with the evil of sin. No evil is displeasing to God or destructive to man but the evil of sin. Sin is worse than affliction than death than Devil than Hell. Affliction is not so afflictive, death is not so deadly, the Devil not so devilish, and Hell not so hellish as sin is. This will help to fill up the charge against its sinfulness, especially as it is contrary to and against the good of man.

It is impossible to speak worse of sin than it really is, or even as badly of it as it really deserves, for it is hyperbolically sinful. There are not enough words; we need more and stronger ones to speak of its vileness. And if we were to say that it is worse than death and the Devil, the very Hell of Hell, this would not be to rail at it, but tell it only the truth about itself. Sin is the quintessence of evil; it has made all the evils that there are and is itself worse than all the evils it has made. It is so evil that it is impossible to make it good or lovely by all the arts than can be used. A poison may be corrected and made medicinal, even if it is not nourishing. But sin is sin, and can be nothing else; its nature cannot be changed, not even by a pardon. It is not only ugly but ugliness, not only filthy but filthiness, not only abominable but an abomination. There is not a worse thing in Hell itself; it has not its fellow there. All this and much more

may be said of and against sin. Having laid this groundwork, then, I shall now build upon it, and proceed to the usefulness of the doctrine of sin's sinfulness and to where sin lodges and made it's dwelling in the heart of men. The plague of the heart is the plague that dwells within each of us, dwells within the hearts of all humankind.

The fact is that man is a reeking mass of corruption. His whole soul is by nature so debased and so depraved, that no description which can be given to him even by inspired tongues can fully tell how base and vile a thing he is.

## WHAT IS SIN?

All wrongdoing is sin 1 John 5:17. Everything and anything a person thinks, says, or does that do not proceed from faith in Jesus Christ is sin Romans 14:23. Sin is to disobey, to break the law of God Nehemiah 9:29. Sin is lawlessness 1 John 3:4.

You, like every other human being, were created in the image of God. You are an image-bearer of your Creator. You know this is true for two reasons:

First, creation itself testifies to the reality of the Creator.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth; For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse:

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:”* Romans 1:18-20 (KJV).

Second, God has given you a conscience. He has written His law on your heart. God has given you the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong, good and evil.

They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

*“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel”* Romans 2:15-16 (KJV).

You know it is wrong to lie because you were created in the image of God, and God is not a liar. God is truth. You know it is wrong to steal because you were created in the image of God, and God is not a thief. God is good. You know it is wrong to engage in any form of sexual immorality because you were created in the image of God, and God is not a fornicator. He is not an adulterer. God is faithful. You know it is wrong to harbor bitterness or resentment in your heart. You know it is wrong to be angry without cause. You know it is wrong to hate another human being, which God equates with murder 1 John 3:15, because you were created in the image of God, and God is not a murderer. God is love. You know it is wrong to take God's name in vain, to use His name to express anger, surprise, disgust, or even joy. You know it's

wrong to make His name common or a curse word because you were created in the image of God, and God is not a blasphemer. God is holy.

But your sin goes even deeper than this. Your sin is not simply wrong thoughts, words, and actions toward other people. All of your sin is against God. King David of Israel knew this well.

*“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest”* Psalms 51:3-4 (KJV).

So heinous are your sins in the mind of God, it is as if you broke into His own Heaven and murdered His Son, trampling through the Son’s blood as you fled.

*“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* Heb. 10:26-31 (KJV).

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Sin is worse than the comprehension of any man and unspeakable in words for the fallen human mind to comprehend. For its remedy, it took the life of the very God of this universe to overcome. It’s very named, “SIN” should frighten men to death. The most horrible of all horrors is it described.

What does the Bible have to say about man’s sinfulness, his ruin, and his fallen state being in total depravity?

It is my sole desire in exposing the greatest danger that is facing the Church today as it always has been to make clear the true nature of humankind in the light of Holy Scripture that we as God’s creation, although fallen, might see our plight as a lost race of people separated from God. That the Holy Ghost might enter the veil of our wicked hearts, drawing us to Christ, tearing down the wall of petition, removing the great gulf fixed between mankind and the highest majesty of our universe Jesus Christ Himself. So this brief writing is penned.

Total depravity, of course, does not mean that human beings are as bad as they possibly could be. All people are not always bad all of the time. Rather total depravity means that no part of our being remains untouched and unaffected by the corruption of sin. Sin has enslaved the total person:

It is not just that some parts of us are sinful and others are pure. Rather, every part of our being is affected by sin, our intellects, our emotions and desires, our hearts, the center of our desires and decision-making

processes, our goals and motives, and even our physical bodies. Paul says, "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" Rom. 7:18, and, "to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted" Titus 1:15. Moreover, Jeremiah tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" Jer. 17:9. In these passages, Scripture is not denying that unbelievers can do well in human society in some senses. But it is denying that they can do any spiritual good or be good in terms of a relationship with God. Apart from the work of Christ in our lives, we are like all other unbelievers who are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" Eph. 4:18.

Our totally depraved human nature as fallen human beings leads to a total inability on our part to do any spiritual good or to please God:

Not only do we as sinners lack any spiritual good in ourselves, but we also lack the ability to do anything that will in itself please God and the ability to come to God in our own strength. Paul says that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" Rom. 8:8. Moreover, in terms of bearing fruit for God's kingdom and doing what pleases him, Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing" John 15:5. In fact, unbelievers are not pleasing to God, if for no other reason, simply because their actions do not proceed from faith in God or from love to him, and "without faith, it is impossible to please him" Heb. 11:6. When Paul's readers were unbelievers, he tells them, "You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked" Eph. 2:1-2. Unbelievers are in a state of bondage or enslavement to sin, because "everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" John 8:34. Though from a human standpoint people might be able to do much good, Isaiah affirms that "all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment" Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:9-20. Unbelievers are not even able to understand the things of God correctly, for the "natural man does not receive the gifts 'things' of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" 1 Cor. 2:14. Nor can we come to God in our own power, for Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" John 6:44.

This then is the sad state of fallen humanity into which we are born: dead in trespasses and sins Eph. 2:1-2, by nature children of wrath Eph. 2:3 and enemies of God Rom. 5:10, darkened in understanding, excluded from the life of God, ignorant, and hard of heart Eph. 4:18, in bondage to sin John 8:34, unable to please God Rom. 8:8, unable to accept and understand the things of God 1 Cor. 2:14, and unable to come to God in our own power John 6:44.

**THIS IS THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE.**

"Even our prayers have stains in them, our faith is mixed with unbelief, our repentance is not as tender as it should be, and our communion is distant and interrupted. We cannot pray without sinning, and there is filth even in our tears."

**THUS GOD'S WORD ON THE SUBJECT IS FINAL!**

Do you believe God's description of your heart? If you do then flee to Christ!

"While it is true that in sin we are all totally depraved, it is also true that in Christ we are fully forgiven."

As I come to the close of this whole matter I would wish with my soul that there might never be an occasion for me or any other to preach on this subject again. Shall I now entreat you to consider what has been said, and to think what an abominable and ugly thing sin is? It is the worst of evils, worse than the

worst of words can express. I have shown you how it is contrary to God and man. For proof of this, I have brought a witness from Heaven, Earth, and Hell. I have shown you how dearly it cost Christ Jesus who died for it, and how dearly it will cost you if you live and die in it. Therefore stand in awe and sin not. Lay up the word of God's command, promise, and threatening, that you may not sin against him. Take heed of sinning, for at once you sin against God and your own selves.

Tell me Baptist preacher who walks among his congregants so high and mighty unwilling to confess his own filthy rotten nature so sinful that he'd rather have God's people admire him and not the example of God's Son. Isn't it about time you come down from your self-made throne and repent of your pride and arrogance? You won't, I know, so suffer the fate of King Saul whose repentance was false before His Mighty God. Saul's confession was to God, he refuses to confess to those in his kingdom, to confess before his fellow men. God, therefore, rejected his confession. True repentance is not the only confession before God but also to our fellow man. The kind of confession that Saul made let's people die and go to hell because you as a pastor were unwilling to confess you're true nature hindering souls from looking and seeing Jesus Christ more clearly. Is it not so that we all should be looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith? See how I've turned the focus on men's true condition, be he saved or lost and entered into the real fallen nature of man exposing the contents of his closeted heart.

I have entered into your closets and your hearts, to tell you of your secret sins. I have told you of and warned you against, the sins of your lips and of your life. I have told you of your shop, and calling, sins, that you might beware. And what shall I say or do more for you? I have preached to you, prayed and wept for you. I have shown you the way of repentance, faith, and holiness. And were I to die for you, I hope I should not account my life dear to me, that I might save your souls by losing it. Let me again, then, entreat, beseech and beg you for God's sake and for your souls' sake not to sin. These things are written, that ye sin not. But hear ye and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, but if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and my eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears' Jeremiah 13:15-17. If you do not hear, you make this to be sad work for me and others who teach you, but, alas, much sadder for yourselves! You make us weep on earth, but you, if you do not repent, will weep in Hell. I beseech you therefore, learn what the grace of God teaches you, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world Titus 2:11-12, or as it is in Luke 1:75, 'Serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness all the days of your life.' Having, therefore, these promises, which according to Peter are the greatest and most precious, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God' 2 Cor. 7:1.

The difference between the godly and the wicked: The heart of the godly is a temple; the heart of the wicked is a dunghill, "a cage of unclean birds," Revelation 18:2. His mind is the devil's mint; he is continually minting unchaste, impure thoughts; his heart is the anvil where he is daily hammering of sin. He is far from being a temple; he is a Sodom wherein are the heavings and boiling of lust. Proverbs 10:20, "The heart of the wicked is little worth." A sinner's heart is a common inn where all who will; may lodge; it is not a temple, but a home of the wretched. He has the plague of the heart. But a godly man's heart is a sacred temple which God highly values, and which He has promised to dwell in and revive.