

## Lesson 6

### Sin's Penalty

#### Penalty or Discipline?

In lesson five we learned that all men are born with a sin nature and that all men are sinners by their own will. Even children are sinners. They lie, cheat, steal, and hate without even being *taught* to do these things. Now we will consider the serious consequences that sin brings. There are, of course, *natural consequences* to sin. As a child our parents may spank us if we lie. If we are caught stealing, we will be in trouble according to the laws of our nation. However, the full penalty of sin is still in the future.

God is a holy God and His wrath must come upon all that offends Him. The penalty of sin is *not* that God will discipline us. God may discipline out of *love* to correct His child (Hebrews 12:6). Sin's penalty however, comes from the *justice* of God and is intended to punish, not correct, the sinner. When a murderer is put to death, this does not correct him, but gives to him the penalty of his sin. In the same way, there is a penalty for sinning against a holy God.

#### Death Penalty

Romans 6:23 clearly states the penalty for sin: "For the wages of sin is **death**." The penalty of sin is *death*. This death penalty has three aspects. There is a *physical* death, a *spiritual* death, and an *eternal* death.

It is common knowledge that every person will one day die. Why? This is part of the death penalty that has come upon mankind due to sin. After Adam sinned, God said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and **unto dust shalt thou return**" (Genesis 3:19). Mankind is under the penalty of *physical death* in which the soul is separated from the body and the body is placed into the ground (or wherever men choose to put the now lifeless body). The Bible speaks of this physical death as "the **common death** of all men" (Numbers 16:29).

The penalty of sin is not only physical death, but also *spiritual death*. This is the separation of the soul from God. Ephesians 2:1 declares that all men in their natural condition are "**dead in trespasses and sins**." The fact that men are "dead in sins" means that they are separated from the presence of God (Ephesians 2:5). Scripture teaches that men are "by nature the **children of wrath**" and thus out of favor with God (Ephesians 2:3). Humanity has lost the knowledge of God "Having the understanding darkened, being **alienated from the life of God** through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18).

#### Eternal Death

Thirdly, the penalty of sin is an *eternal death*. Eternal death is the eternal separation of the soul from God. Physical death is the first death and eternal death is the second death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**" (Revelation 20:14). This is the final and eternal state of those who suffer the penalty of sin. God's judgment is referred to as destroying "both soul and body in **hell**" (Matthew 10:28). This penalty will involve "**everlasting fire**" as men will "be punished with **everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (Matthew 25:41, II Thessalonians 1:9).

Thus, it is evident that there are extremely serious consequences to sin. "It is a **fearful** thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Eternal death is eternal suffering without hope of ever getting relief. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with **fire and brimstone**: which is the **second death**" (Revelation 21:8). Notice that Revelation 21:8 includes "liars" as those who will suffer the second death. Since the Bible teaches that all men are sinners and liars, we can only conclude that all men, in their natural condition, are under the penalty of sin.

### Review Questions

#### True or False

1. The consequences of sin are not very serious.
2. The wages of sin is death.
3. The penalty of sin includes physical, but not spiritual, death.
4. Many people will find the hands of God fearful instead of loving.

#### Multiple Choice

5. God will surely punish sin because He is:
  - a. mean
  - b. holy and just
  - c. easily angered
  - d. merciful
6. The ultimate cause of physical death is:
  - a. a poor diet
  - b. old age
  - c. a lack of faith
  - d. the curse on mankind resulting from Adam's sin

7. Eternal death is:

- a. eternal separation of the soul from God
- b. suffering in Purgatory
- c. extinction
- d. not a Biblical teaching

### **Fill in the Blanks**

8. There are often natural consequences to sin in this life. However, the \_\_\_ penalty of sin is still future.

9. The penalty of sin is \_\_\_.

10. Spiritual death is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the soul from God.

### **For Further Study**

1. How does James 2:26 show that "death" in the Bible means separation, not extinction?

2. What can humanity be certain of, according to Ecclesiastes 12:14?

3. What was the origin of death? (Genesis 2:17, Romans 5:12)

4. What will God judge? (see Romans 2:16)

5. Is the penalty of sin a conscious suffering or are the dead unconscious? (see Luke 16:19-31)

6. What will the Lord do according to I Chronicles 16:33?

7. Who will be the Judge when all men must come before God? (see John 5:22)

8. What day is spoken of in Acts 17:31?

9. How is eternal death described in Matthew 13:42 and Matthew 25:30?

10. What will happen to those who insist that they are innocent? (see Romans 3:19)

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