

*A Study
on the
First Epistle
to
Timothy*

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Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is presented here-

in is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our intu-

ition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with

[Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

A Study on the First Epistle to Timothy

From John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

Four of Paul's epistles were written to individuals. Three of them, the two epistles to Timothy, and the epistle to Titus, are called Pastoral Epistles because of the nature of the instructions relative to the training and governing of churches.

Paul's first imprisonment was probably during the years 62-63 A.D., while some say 61-62 A.D. If our date is correct, he was tried, probably in the presence of Nero, and acquitted in the year 63 A.D. While the narrative of Acts informs us that Paul was held in Rome for two years, it says nothing of the trial and his release. What information we have of these facts must be gathered from two of his epistles. It is only by indirect notices in his letters, and by statements of uninspired writers that we have any knowledge of Paul's activities following his release from imprisonment.

It is generally believed that from Rome he went to Asia Minor and Macedonia and spent some time in Spain. If he left Rome in 63 A.D., and was again

imprisoned in Rome in 68 A.D., these last labors of the apostle extended over the brief period of four to five years.

False teachers were at work perverting the truth as declared by Paul and others. In Ephesus and Crete he found conditions of a very disturbing nature as seen by his instructions to Timothy and Titus.

We cannot fix with certainty the time and place of writing the first epistle to Timothy. It was sometime between the years 64 and 67 A.D. Some say from Rome, but that is obviously mistaken if we accept the second imprisonment. Macedonia or some neighboring district is suggested in verse 1:3. Laodicea is also suggested in some documentation.

Timothy lived in Lystra with his Jewish mother, Eunice and Greek father. He was carefully trained in the Old Testament by his mother and grandmother. It was probably when Paul first visited that section in Asia that Timothy was converted to Christianity. The apostle called Timothy his “true son in the faith.” Paul took him as one of his companions on the third missionary journey and the most affectionate relations between them were sustained to the end of the apostle’s life. His last epistle was to this disciple.

Timothy was stationed at Ephesus where heretical teachers carried on their destructive work. In this epistle the apostle gives this young pastor just the in-

struction needed to meet the needs of the situation in Ephesus. He does not discuss doctrines, but gives direction for the training and governing of the church.

Paul's Calling and the Law

Paul, an apostle of God our Savior to Timothy, my son in the faith: grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I counseled you when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus, so you can charge those teaching other doctrines to stop. Neither should they give heed to fables and endless genealogies that occasion doubts rather than godly edification in faith. The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, from which some have turned aside unto fruitless discussion. They wish to be teachers of the law, neither understanding their own words, nor those things which they confidently affirm. But we know that the law is good, if it is used properly: knowing this, that the law is not given righteous men, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for liars, for perjurers, and anything that opposed sound doctrine.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord for entrusting me, a blasphemer, and persecutor, with the message of the gospel. I obtained mercy for what I did because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. The grace of our Lord was exceedingly abun-

dant in faith and love: Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I was chief. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.

This charge I give unto you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies that were given to you, that you war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience, which some have abandoned including Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme.

Pray For Those in Authority

Paul opens this second chapter by exhorting Timothy to pray for those in authority, asking for a quiet and peaceful life in all honesty and godliness.

Then he adds that God our Savior will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. This statement seems to be in direct conflict with Paul's guidance in Romans 8:28-30 and in many other scriptures, indicating that God chooses those who are foreordained to be conformed to image of Jesus Christ (to be saved). We know that God does not sow confusion so we need to examine this statement in Timothy carefully.

First, we need to realize that the context of Paul's writing in Timothy is about all kinds of men, including Kings, and men in high places. Thus, we might tend to believe that he is talking about all **kinds** of men, and not all men in general. Also, this fourth verse seems like a sort of clarifying statement to verse 2 and 3, rather than another category of men. Sure enough, the third edition of the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by J. Green gives this phrase as "God desires all sorts of men," which would eliminate the conflict.

Several Bible expositors that I consulted also gave similar interpretations of this phrase.

Verse 5 identifies Jesus as the Mediator of the new covenant, and Hebrews 9:14-15 adds that His purpose (as Mediator) is to purge our conscience from dead works, and insure that those that are called receive their eternal inheritance by being sanctified. Paul then adds that he has been ordained as a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. He desires that men pray by lifting up holy hands, regardless of where they are, and not to succumb to anger nor get into arguments. When women pray they should dress modestly, and sensibly in respectable attire, and not with elaborate hairstyles, nor costly array. Rather they should adorn themselves with good works. Let a woman learn in silence, in all subjection, focussing her attention on her children's Christian upbringing. Childbearing is a spiritual growth experience for a woman provided she continues trusting, loving, and living a holy life with modesty. According to Paul, women shouldn't be teaching men, nor usurping authority over them.

Many 21st century Christian women would disagree with Paul's remarks here about the role of women in the church, and in the home. A teaching on the spiritual relationship between a husband and wife in Ephesians 5:21-33, also

written by Paul, may help to clarify his position on this somewhat touchy subject.

Qualifications of Bishops and Deacons

This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, able to teach, not a drinker, not contentious, not covetous. He must manage his own household well, with children who obey him with respect. Not a novice, lest he be lifted up with pride and fall into condemnation. Moreover, he must have a good witness from those outside the church. Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, and not guilty of ill-gotten gain. He should hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Let them be tested first, then let them minister. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, and faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their own households and children well. For those that have served well gain a good grade for themselves and much boldness in faith.

I hope to come to you shortly, but if I am delayed these guidelines will help you in overseeing the church of God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, jus-

tified in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed by nations, believed on in the world, and was taken up into glory.

The Falling Away

Every Christian is responsible to see that the power and truth of holiness is maintained in his/her own heart and life. Without sanctification, which leads us to holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Only by becoming sanctified will apostasy (falling away) be restrained. If people are not sanctified, churches will not be holy, nor will nations. Some will deny that apostasy seems to be underway in our own nation even now. But a report in the March 2019 AFA Journal indicates that mainline Protestant church membership has declined from one of every six Americans in the 1960's, to one of every 22 today, a precipitous change by any standard. But many Christians are certain they will never be one of those that commit apostasy. John Owen's book entitled "Apostasy From the Gospel," uses the example of Peter as one that thought he would never deny Christ. Later, in writing his first letter, he warns Christians to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16), for they are of the world and can lead to falling away.

There are two passages in Hebrews that give advice related to apostasy:

Hebrews 6:1-6 says, *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*

Hebrews 10:25-27 says: *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin willingly after that we have received the knowledge 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.* These passages of scripture remind us of the significance of being faithful to the church body to which we are attached, and to keep ourselves (abide in Christ), where we cannot be touched by the wicked one (1 John 5:18).

I think there are three warning signs that can be relied on to help us determine when an act or thought is considered sinful by God: 1) the Bible is God's

Word, and it is absolutely the most reliable resource for defining the boundaries of sin; 2) the conscience of believers **into** Jesus Christ has been cleansed by His blood (Hebrews 10:22), and thus provides a valuable check on sinful acts and thoughts; and 3) the believer **into** Jesus Christ is both **in** Christ, and has Christ **in** him (John 17:21-23), thus Christ provides a check on **all** actions and thoughts to which we are enticed. I find that these last two warning signs are very helpful in my life. A more complete analysis of sin is provided in an article entitled “How About Sin” included in the Appendix of this study.

When Paul was arrested by the Jews and later rescued by the Romans after it was disclosed that he was a Roman citizen, he appeared before king Agrippa in Caesarea. In his own defense Paul summed up his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus: he was to be a minister and witness to the Gentiles. *“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”* (Acts 26:18). Oswald Chambers comments on this verse in his “My Utmost for His Highest,” and says that the words *“that they may receive remission of sins”* refer to salvation. He further adds that salvation means we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God through Jesus Christ, viz., remission of sins. There follows the sec-

ond mighty work of grace: *“and inheritance among them which are sanctified.”* “In sanctification the regenerated soul deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God’s interest in other men.” The Bible seems to say that a person can be saved, but unless he then enters sanctification he/she will not see Jesus.

I was saved (believed **in** Christ) when I was a teenager. It did not keep me from from sinning, and my prayer life was pitiful, for I did not “know” Christ: I did not have a personal relationship with Him (I had not believed **“into”** Him). I, and six other men, were at a Methodist men’s retreat in the fall of 1963, and Jesus Christ came into the room in which we were housed. I did not know anything about the Holy Spirit, nor did I believe that the Lord dealt with men that way except in Bible times. He talked to me (in my mind), and His message was that He wanted to be part of my life. When we got up from prayer I found that all of us had received a similar message: some were directed to give up certain acts, but with me it seemed that He wanted to come into my life and lead me in the way I should go. Later, I realized that this was a change in my relationship with Him. I joined Him on the cross and welcomed His nature’s displacement of my old sin nature. He then began to be my Mediator through the Holy Spirit: I was entering into sanctification, a word I was not

familiar with prior to that time. But it is everything the Bible says: He has been cleaning up my life ever since that time, and He has given me an insatiable love for His Word, and His presence is always with me. The timing between my believing **in** Jesus and believing **into** Him was approximately forty years. The story of this encounter with Him at the retreat, and what happened afterward, is available at no cost on [Scribd in the book titled “A Man of God” by Jesse C. Jones](#). (If a membership offer pops up simply click past that pop-up screen to view online or download as you wish.)

John Owen gives seven danger signs of approaching apostasy in his book, “Apostasy From the Gospel,” I have listed them as follows:

Sign one - The loss of all appreciation of the goodness, excellence, and glories of the truth of the gospel.

Sign two - Loss of conviction that the gospel is true and comes from God.

Sign three - Contempt for the things promised in the gospel (results from Sign one and two above). Out of hatred for Jesus Christ the apostate rejects and despises the promises and continually deprives his soul of them.

Sign four - Total rejection of the Christian religion for another religion, or partial rejection of the gospel for the superstitious doctrines and the idolatrous worship of other religions.

Sign five - Rejection of Christ’s faithful people, the believers.

Sign six - Apostates despise the Spirit of God and his work in the gospel dispensation.

Sign seven - Total apostasy shows itself in the open profession and declaration of hatred against the gospel.

Paul ends this section by encouraging Timothy and telling him not to neglect the gift that was in him through prophecy, and the laying on of hands. Timothy was equipped to carry on the work of Paul for he had received special endowment for his mission. To allay needless opposition from local Jews he was circumcised before he set out on his journeys. Timothy's mother Eunice was a Jewess and is credited with instructing Timothy in the scriptures. His father was Greek, which was probably the reason for Timothy not being circumcised heretofore.

Guidance for Timothy's Ministry

Treat elders with respect, as a father, and younger men as brethren; and treat elder women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with all purity. Show respect to widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn to perform their religious duty to their own family and thus repay their indebtedness to their forebears, for this is acceptable to God. But if the widow is self-indulgent she is already dead, even though she still lives. Anyone that does not provide for their own people, especially for his own family, has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be recognized as a widow if she is over sixty years old, was faithful to her husband, and is known for her good deeds, has reared her children well, showed hospitality, helped those in trouble and has been engaged in all kinds of good work. Paul suggests that younger widows remarry, bear children, guide the household, and give no occasion to the adversary to speak slanderously. Sadly, some have already turned aside to follow the adversary. If any believing woman have relatives that are widows she should provide relief for them, and let the church body provide help for those that are in greater need.

The elders that lead well should be considered for greater honor, especially those that minister the Word in teaching. For the scripture says, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,” in other words “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” Never listen to any accusation against a leader unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. Rebuke before the entire assembly those leaders that continue sinning, as a warning sign to the others.

I charge you before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that you observe these guidelines without preferring one before the other, doing nothing by partiality. Do not lay hands suddenly on any man, for all such actions require the blessing of God, and surety about the character of the one prayed for. Keep thyself pure and do not become a partaker of another man’s sin. Some men’s sins are obvious at the time they are committed, but some are not known until they are exposed at a later time. Likewise, the good works of some men are manifest at the time of occurrence, but some will not become publicized until later, so be circumspect in your judgment of both sin and good works.

The Love of Money

Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we will carry nothing out. We should be content with having food on our table and clothing for our bodies. But they that want to be rich often fall into temptation, and they get trapped by many foolish and hurtful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil, causing some to wonder away from the faith and pierce themselves with many sorrows. But you, Timothy, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, goodness, faith, love, patience and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, to which you were called and confessed before many witnesses. I charge you before God that you keep the teachings of Jesus (the Gospel) spotless, and blameless until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. His appearing will be brought about in its own time by the blessed and sole Sovereign, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, who dwells in the heavenly light which no man can see: to whom be honor and power forever and forever. Amen.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they not be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us all things to enjoy. They should do good, and be rich in good deeds, ready to share what they have. In this way they will treasure for themselves a good foundation for the time that is to come that they may lay hold on eternal life, which is life indeed.

Oh, Timothy, keep safe what has been entrusted to you. Turn away from empty babbling and opposing theories that some have asserted, and thus missed the mark of the high calling. Grace be with you. Amen.

How About Sin?

What is Sin?

Sin is a most difficult word to understand. Those who tend to minimize the seriousness of sin may opt for the definition that says sin is “missing the mark.” At the other end of the spectrum you might find fire and damnation preachers such as Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), who would probably have defined sin as “red-handed mutiny against God.” Edwards preached one of the most powerful sermons of all time entitled, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language gives the definition of sin as: “The breaking of religious law or moral principle, especially through a willful act.”

The Hebrew word interpreted as sin in the old testament (OT) is *hata'*, which is the root word used to mean miss, miss the way, sin, incur guilt, forfeit, purify from uncleanness. This word is seldom used in the OT, but five derivatives meaning sin, sinners, sinful thing, and sin offering are used with some frequency. The Greek word *hamartia* is used to define sin in the new testament (NT). “The literal meaning of this word is ‘a missing of the mark’, but this

meaning is largely lost in the NT, where it is used to mean a principle or source of action, or inward element producing acts; a governing principle or power; a generic term that includes concrete wrongdoing; and a sinful deed or act of sin” (Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words). The NT use of this word conveys the meaning of a “course of sin”, or “sin nature”, as opposed to the OT use of derivatives of *hata’* as “acts of sin”.

I believe the difficulty in grasping a clear understanding of the word sin comes down to the fact that we tend to appropriate a meaning most favorable to the lifestyle we have adopted. God made it relatively easy to identify temptations to sin that come our way: 1 John 2:16 says, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*”

When believers are personally faced by a decision in regard to questionable acts we usually resort to some excuse such as:

- 1) this is not really a sin since it not identified as such in the Bible;
- 2) I do not intend to sin in doing this;
- 3) the Bible guidance on this is obviously for extreme cases (Matthew 5:29);
- 4) speaking out for Christ wasn’t appropriate;

- 5) God doesn't expect me to be perfect (Matthew 5:48);
- 6) he is not really my neighbor;
- 7) I don't really have the time or money;
- 8) ad infinitum.

I think there are three warning signs that can be relied on to help us determine when an act or thought is considered sinful by God:

- 1) the Bible is God's Word, and it is absolutely the most reliable resource for defining the boundaries of sin;
- 2) the conscience of believers **into** Jesus Christ has been cleansed by His blood (Hebrews 10:22), and thus provides a valuable check on sinful acts and thoughts; and
- 3) the believer **into** Jesus Christ is both **in** Christ, and has Christ **in** him (John 17:21-23), thus Christ provides a check on **all** the actions and thoughts to which we are enticed.

Sin and the Cross

Jesus took the sins the believer committed during the time they were under the influence of their sin (Adamic) nature when He died on the cross. In this He fulfilled the OT ceremony of Atonement: when the Israelites' sins were cast on the head of the scapegoat, and it was led into the wilderness to die. From this we might be led to believe that our sins were cast on Jesus before He was arrested, tried, condemned, and led to Golgotha, which represented the wilderness, to die. However, this seems doubtful in view of the many things (healing of Malchus' ear, His encounter with Pilate, the beating and ridicule He received, Pilate's attempt to release Him, utterances from the cross, etc.), that occurred following Jesus' prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane. In trying to resolve the question as to when Jesus took on our sins two events stand out that give us some guidance. While Jesus was on the cross darkness covered the earth from 12 PM until 3 PM. Jesus cried out at that time "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" According to the Bible, when God does something momentous on earth He often marks that event by causing the sun to darken. The sacrifice of God's Son in taking on this burden of sin was possibly the most important event that ever occurred, and it would certainly warrant some notable action by God. At the end of the three-hour period of darkness Jesus

cried out as a result of what we surmise was the Holy Spirit leaving (forsaking) Him. If this was the time when the burden of sin was placed on our Lord this would also be the time when He **became** sin (1 Peter 2:24; 2 Colossians 5:21). The Holy Spirit left Him at this time, for God cannot abide evil, neither can He look on iniquity (Habakkuk 1:12-13). His pure and unsullied conscience undoubtedly received the guilt associated with that sin, and His godly nature was replaced by a sin nature. He had to suffer all these afflictions so sinners could be born again and conformed to the image of Christ. Specifically, this is what Jesus Christ does for those who become believers by joining Him in His death on the cross:

1. He washed them with pure water and shed His innocent blood for their sins (Ezekiel 36:25; John 3:5; 13:8, 10; 15:3; Hebrews 10:22).
2. He replaced the inclination to choose evil (the sin nature), with His own godly nature (Ezekiel 36:26; Ephesians 4:21-24; Colossians 3:9-10). Thus, future decisions are influenced by guidance received from the Holy Spirit, a defense in combatting future sin.
3. He removed the guilt of past sin from their consciences (Ezekiel 36:26; Hebrews 10:22), thus we can go to God directly for prayer and guidance.

4. He provided the sacrifice for sins committed after salvation (Ezekiel 36:27, 1 John 1:9), but we must confess our sin, and change our mind to see the sin as God sees it (1 John 1:9).
5. He gave the Holy Spirit as comforter (Ezekiel 36:27, John 14:16) to guide and correct us when we do succumb to enticements.

The Power of the Blood

The OT story of the release of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt as a result of the final plague is very symbolic of our “release,” or forgiveness of sins by the shed blood of Jesus. God instructed the Israelites to paint their doorposts with the Passover Lamb’s blood. He did this to protect their firstborn from the death angel, who *passed over* (exempted them from the plague) when he saw the blood. In the same way Satan must *pass over* us when He sees the blood of Jesus “painted” on the doorposts of our hearts. The Lord’s Supper was ordained by Jesus for this very purpose. When we take the wine during the Lord’s Supper we symbolically renew the blood on the doorposts of our hearts, received when we first believed **into** Christ. When Satan sees the blood he passes over just as the death angel did in Egypt during the first

Passover. Of course, we must participate in the ceremony worthily (1 Corinthians 11:27), recognizing that the bread and wine represent the very flesh and blood of Jesus that produce His life within us (John 6:53-58).

Sins of the Believer

I now want to expand on what happens within us when we become believers, when we receive this wonderful blessing for which Christ died. Romans 3:23-25 says, *“For all have sinned, and come [fall] short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past [because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime], through the forbearance of God.”* Bible expositors do not agree on the interpretation of this passage of scripture. The main point of disagreement is the phrase relating to past sins: some argue that this refers to sins of the OT saints that occurred before the advent of Christ, while others hold that this refers to all past sins of Jews and Gentiles alike, before they receive salvation. To me the latter interpretation seems most logical: the blood of Jesus expiates our past sins and we are pardoned by God through the propitiation of Jesus Christ.

The word “propitiation” relates to the place (mercy seat) in the Holy of Holies in the Temple where God met with the High Priest on the day of Atonement to expiate the sins of the Jewish people. In this passage this word refers to the reconciliation of God with those whose sins were cleansed through the blood of Christ.

After this believers essentially have a clean slate with God, they are innocent but not holy: they are totally free to choose between God’s will and the worldly way they have known in the past. But what about sins believers commit after they have been born again? We know there are several scriptures that state that Christ died for the sins of many, as well as those that state that He died for “us”, and for “all”. Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible argues that any confusion here can be explained by the fact that Jesus died for all sins, every act of sin, and every type of sin, but only those who receive salvation through faith in the blood of Christ can claim access to this forgiveness. We also know that in addition to our individual sins, Jesus took our sin nature when we joined Him on the cross. Thus, as a born again believer we no longer have a sin nature, so we are not by nature a sinner, i.e. we do not have an overriding tendency to sin. When a believer sins it is not a result of his/her nature, we do not have a habit of sinning. Christ has already died on the cross for whatever

sins we commit; therefore, we need to go to Him with repentance (feeling guilty and contrite), and confess our sin: He is faithful and just to forgive our sin (Acts:3:19; 1 John 1:9). Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible says: "A man that truly confesses his sin is one that the Spirit of God has convinced him of it, and has shown him its exceeding sinfulness, and filled him with a godly sorrow for it." I have also heard that the word "*confess*" in this verse carries the implication that we agree with God's assessment of the sin, and determine to turn in the exact opposite direction and follow God's guidance if confronted by this temptation in the future.

It is absolutely necessary to accept the forgiveness of sins provided by Jesus' death on the cross to become a believer. I recently came across a statement relative to this that I believe to be true, although I cannot find a Bible scripture that says it exactly: "The man who has not accepted his own forgiveness cannot extend forgiveness to his brother." We know the Bible says that when we fail to forgive, God cannot forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15). This is a very important principle, for there are many believers that seem to be unable to forgive others for offenses that occurred prior to their coming to Christ. Also, some have difficulty accepting forgiveness for their own sins which, from this scripture, would seem to keep God from being able to forgive them. This is

not a case of God refusing to forgive, but actually being unable to forgive. If we refuse to accept forgiveness for our own sins we are basically refusing to believe in the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and therefore, cannot be cleansed: a requirement for salvation (Titus 3:5).

Can we be perfect?

I have long deliberated over the meaning of scriptures such as Matthew 5:48 and Ephesians 4:13, that seem to indicate we should be, or become, perfect. What bothered me about this is was the many scriptures that mention believers sinning, and never totally able to put sin out of their lives. After studying this subject I was surprised to discover that the Greek New Testament (GNT) does not use the word “perfect” in Ephesians 4:13. In Matthew 5:48 the consensus seems to be that the word “perfect” is limited to that level of perfection in God’s love that mankind is capable of manifesting. In considering this word as used in the Bible, I could find no justification for the understanding that man can be perfect as God is perfect. The common meaning in both the OT and NT of the word “perfect” seems to be that of being “complete,” with reference to a single trait or characteristic.

The observations of Oswald Chambers in “My Utmost for His Highest” on the subject of sin, and our responsibility in dealing with it in our lives, is most helpful to me. I have selected some pithy comments from his analysis on various scriptures below in the hope that they may offer guidance and clarification to others in their walk with our Lord:

Galatians 2:20 - “What Our Lord wants us to present to Him is not goodness, not honesty, nor endeavor, but real solid sin; that is all He can take from us.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 - “The penalty of sin is confirmation in sin.”

Romans 6:6 - “Am I prepared to let the Spirit of God search me until I know what the disposition of sin is - the thing that lusts against the Spirit of God in me? Then if so, will I agree with God’s verdict on the disposition of sin - that it should be identified with the death of Jesus?”

Isaiah 53:3 - “If sin rules in me, God’s life in me will be killed.”

Isaiah 6:5 - “A man will say easily—‘Oh, yes, I know I am a sinner;’ but when he gets into the presence of God he cannot get off with that statement. The conviction is concentrated on - I am this, or that, or the other. There is never any vague sense of sin, but the concentration in some personal particular.”

John 3:9 - “This scripture does not mean that we cannot sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we need not sin.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 - “Sin is a fundamental relationship; it is not wrong doing, it is wrong being, deliberate and emphatic independence of God.”

Questions from 1 Timothy

Chapter 1

1. Explain verse 16.

Chapter 2

1. What is your opinion about verses 9-15?

Chapter 4

1. What is your opinion regarding the "falling away" predicted in verse 1?
2. What does the phrase "... specially of those that believe" mean in verse 10?

Chapter 5

1. Explain verse 22.

Chapter 6

1. Why do you think that the love of money is the root of all evil?

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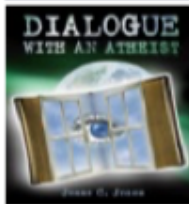
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