

The Pleasures of Sin

Ahhhh, the pleasures of sin. Settle down, relax and let's talk about them.

We read in Hebrews 11:24-25: "by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." We see in God's Word that there are often temporary "pleasures" in sin; otherwise, few would do it. But if it "hurt" to sin—if it was immediately painful; if we could feel the effects of sin instantaneously; if it bruised or lacerated or burned every time we sinned, we would be very careful not to sin.

Your Bible defines sin as the breaking or transgressing of God's law (1 John 3:4). Further, the wages of sin is death for all eternity (Romans 6:23).

Being finite, man's problem is spiritual and infinite. We often do not recognize that there are vacillations in the time between various acts and their penalties. Let's talk about the three stages of penalty.

Immediate penalty: as in touching a hot stove. When I was a child, I accidentally backed into a red-hot coal-burning stove and burned my elbow severely. I knew immediately that that was not the thing to do! If all sins were punished with immediate severity, we would quickly learn that sin does not pay.

Intermediate penalty: as in leaping off a tall building. Conceivably, we could leap off a tall building or high cliff and fantasize about how much "fun" it would be on the way down. However, we usually have foresight enough to see

that a severe penalty is waiting to "spank" us at the bottom of our journey.

Far-reaching penalty: as in injurious attitudes, bad health habits, or in breaking God's laws. How many of us can see far enough ahead to see the penalties that lie in store for us when the time between action and reaction—between the sin and its penalty—is protracted?

Ecclesiastes 8:11 tells us, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." The "lag time" between sin and its penalty is often very seductive, allowing us to deceive ourselves that we are getting away with something. Although we can see the cause and effect when we touch a hot stove, or the folly of jumping off a high edifice, how many of us can see far enough ahead to realize the penalties we will incur if, for example, we maintain injurious attitudes in our relationship with God or our fellow man? Proverbs 23:7 tells us that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Evil thoughts engender evil deeds. Continuing, how many foresee the disastrous effects of smoking, overeating, or overdrinking? And how many comprehend the wages of directly violating any of God's other commandments, such as committing adultery, stealing, or Sabbath-breaking? Do we really see sin as God sees sin, or do we try to rationalize our way around it?

Seen from a "God's eye" view, the pleasures of sin are but momentary and

end in misery and death.

God said in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Let us choose life over the pleasures of sin.

Self-Examination

Let us examine ourselves, not just once a year at Passover time, but every day, through the eyeglasses of God's Word. Let us see sin as God sees sin. Let us turn to God with all our heart, mind and strength (Luke 10:27).

Now let us skip back to the time Israel was captive in Egypt. Egypt was a type of sin. Israel was a type of the church—and ultimately of us as individuals. Pharaoh was a type of Satan and his demons.

When God brought Jacob and his house into Egypt long before the time of Moses, did He know they would multiply and become slaves in Egypt for 400 years? Positively yes! We read in Genesis 15:13, "And He said unto Abram, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.'" Then why did God do it? I think that is a fair question. When we see what God had in mind and how He delivered Israel from Egypt, we see a pattern of how God delivers His people from sin.

God freed Israel by invoking ten great plagues upon Egypt—one upon

each of their major “gods”.

Why did God deliver Israel this way? First Corinthians 10:11 tells us, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” God was showing Israel, their captors, and His people today who and what God is—who and what is the ultimate authority!

Do you think God could have just “tweaked” Pharaoh’s mind? Absolutely. Just as He stirred up, roused, and inspired many throughout history. Instead, He chose to reveal Himself and His mighty power through mighty miracles.

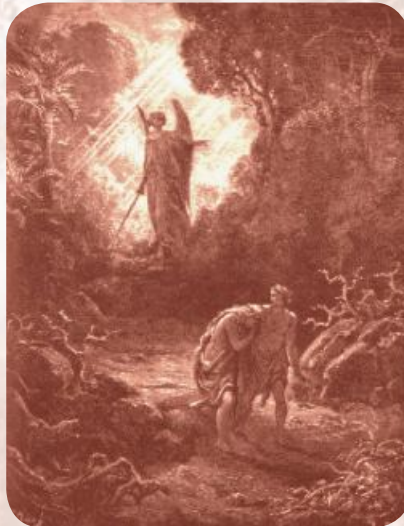
When we are called into God’s truth we must come to the same crossroad: we must decide who and what is our ultimate authority. Is it our past notions or ideas? Our old friends, family, or the opinions of others? Is it our politics or philosophy? Or is it our own emotions, feelings, wants, or desires? Whatever comes between you and the true God is nothing less than a form of idolatry and it must go!

All apostasy begins with questioning what God said, and raising up a second authority equal to or superior to it. When two authorities conflict, the deciding authority then becomes a third authority—a judge-between the other two. We must constantly beware that we are not put into the compromising position of putting our own views, wants, and habits ahead of the Bible thus “judging” God’s Word.

If you find yourself becoming confused or uncertain about a doctrine or issue, perhaps there is some conflicting, alternate “authority” plaguing your mind. Have you been viewing the Word of God through the eyes of men or are you viewing the ideas of men through the eyes of God and His Word? Let no man deceive you: compromise leads to sin.

Consider the example of Adam and Eve. The very first thing Satan did was to question what God said: “Yea, hath God said...?” (Genesis 3:1). He next raised up a second alternative with

promises and logical-sounding arguments. Eve, listening to the tempter, weighed the arguments and decided to “experiment.” She became, in effect, the third or final authority. She “judged”



Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden because of their disobedience.



God, through his mighty deeds, has shown us how he delivered Israel from Egypt — the land of sin.

God’s Word and found it wanting. Regrettably, Eve made the wrong choice.

If God has called you, He has opened your mind and shown you the false gods—the idols, and the wrong behavioral patterns in your life, just as surely as He has shown and called Israel out of the idolatry and paganism of Egypt.

God is showing us our faults, our sins, our idols today—not by horrendous plagues—but by and through His Spirit and His holy days. Consider the Days of Unleavened Bread. God chose leaven as an agent to remind us of our sins because...

1. Like sin, leaven is usually invisible (we often have trouble seeing

our own sins unless we really look for them).

2. Like sin, leaven is all around us, everywhere (often where you least expect it).

3. Like sin, leaven puffs up (makes us proud, complacent, and indifferent). We need to diligently search out the leaven of sin in our lives and cast it out as though our lives depended upon it because it does.

“If Baal be god, serve him...but if God is God, serve Him” (1 Kings 18:21)! When God calls us out, it is a miraculous intervention in our lives (John 6:44). When we are called, we,



1 John 3:4 tells us that sin is the transgression of God’s law.

like Israel, have three choices:

1. We can return to Egypt and the pleasures of sin. (We can give up, return to our old ways of life.)

2. We can “camp out” in the wilderness of sin. (We can wander through life murmuring, compromising, and deceiving ourselves that we are “in tight” with God, not realizing that we are spiritually wretched, poor, blind, and naked Revelation 3:17).

3. We can move with haste to the Promised Land. (We can change, grow, and overcome, putting away our sins and drawing close to God through meditation, Bible study, and prayer.)

Let us examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5), put sin out of our lives, get behind the work that Jesus Christ has called us to do (Matthew 28:19,20), and move ahead to the Promised Land!) **AG**