

Sin unto Death

1 John 5:16

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

- The purpose for looking at some other scriptures is to get a clearer picture of what John was saying in 1 John 5:16.
- In the book of 1 John, he speaks much of walking in the light, that you cannot walk in darkness and say that you are walking with Christ. You cannot hate your brother and say that you are in the light. Then he says that there are many antichrists and that they went out from among the Christians. (1 John 2:18-29)
- He then continues to exhort them to continue walking in love and not to continue to sin habitually. Habitual sin, as you will see from the scriptures below, will get you to a place where your heart is hardened and becomes a heart of unbelief. He tells us that we have assurance that we are the children of God by keeping his ways. Then he moves on to tell us that we can have assurance that our prayers are heard. Right after speaking about prayer, he tells us to pray for a brother who sins a sin not unto death and he will be given life. Then he says that there is a sin unto death, but do not pray for that. Why did he throw this in there?
- Because he was speaking about those who left their midst by becoming antichrists. Just like all these verses that we will look at, those who have tasted of the things of God and then turn and deny him, count his blood as an unholy thing, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, these are twice dead, reserved for darkness forever. He did not want the saints to try to pray for these who had turned their backs on Jesus because this is a petition that he would not answer. These people had already made their choice and it was to crucify Christ again.
- John wanted the saints to see that they had all that they needed and they could walk in Christ's love. His warning was to show them the severity of allowing darkness to have a foothold in their lives. He also wanted them to see that other than turning completely away from Christ, there was hope for restoration of a Christian's walk.
- May this truth be seen and shared with those who have backslidden and felt that they could not be restored because they misunderstood the following verses. God has grace for us sinners and in the book of 1 John it mentions that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father.
- The sin unto death would not be speaking about physical death since it would be too late to pray for that person at that point. It has to deal with a spiritual death.
- The following verses will show what I believe the sin unto death is.

Note: The letter to the Hebrews speaks a lot about regarding Jesus in his proper light as the Son of God, not letting the things that they heard slip, not neglecting so great a salvation, not hardening their hearts through the deceitfulness of sin, not falling short of the rest of God through unbelief, of not having to lay again the foundational truths in their lives. Obviously the people that were being written to were having some difficulties in their lives and they needed some encouragement as well as some warnings. After writing to them about all the things I just mentioned, the writer shares a heavy truth about those who turn away from Christ. As you will see, this is about more than backsliding (as we normally think about it), it is about coming to a point of rejecting Christ.

Heb 6:4-8

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 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.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

Definition of fall away: to abandon a former relationship or association, or to dissociate (a type of reversal of beginning to associate) - 'to fall away, to forsake, to turn away'; denoting a falling away, an abandonment.

- We all know people who have backslidden and even done horrible things but yet were able to come to a point of repentance again. They have walked in sin, but they would never deny Jesus and all that he has accomplished, even though they were not walking in his ways.
- This verse is not speaking about people who backslide and then are able to repent and get their lives back together.
- I believe that this verse is speaking about those who have come to a relationship with Christ but have turned their backs on him and deny him.
- They continue to produce thorns and briers. Isn't this what John was warning them about in the book of first John? You cannot continue to walk in darkness without it having a profound effect upon your life. There are also warnings in Hebrews about having your heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
- The next set of verses comes from Hebrews also and I believe to be related to the Hebrews 6 verses. We must remember that the book is written as a letter and there are specific ideas that are being expressed in the full context of the letter.

Heb 10:26-31

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot 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?

30 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.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Definition of hath trodden under foot: to trample on, equivalent to 'to treat with rudeness and insult'; to thoroughly despise someone or something - 'to despise, to treat with complete disdain; to look on with scorn, trample under foot, treat with disdain; metaphorically, of "treading under foot" the Son of God, Heb 10:29, i. e., turning away from Him, to indulge in willful sin.

- These are people who knew Christ and now count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. They despise the Lord Jesus. These are not the type of people we think of as 'just backslidden', if I may use that terminology for the sake of differentiating between those who backslide and those who count the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing.

2 Peter 2:1-22

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among

you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness (same word as mist in Jude), to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

- Clean escaped means barely escaped, new believers who are just escaping the trappings of the world.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

- These men who walk after the flesh, self-willed, despising authority, who take exuberant delight in their own deceivings while they are feasting with you, with eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin, beguiling vacillating or unsettled souls, a heart that they have trained with covetous practices, they have forsaken the right way and are gone astray (no longer believing what is true but believing what is false), and now they are reserved to the gloom of darkness forever. These are the guys who are leading the barely escaped ones into the same lifestyle.
- Please note that these people are in the midst of the people of God. They are reserved for darkness and they lead others who are unstable or barely escaped into the same lifestyle. These that they lead are said to be like dogs returning to their vomit. They have gotten entangled, interwoven in the things of the flesh and overcome, and they turn back to their former beliefs.
- It would have been better if they would never have known the truth than to know it and turn back

Jude 3-13

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 *Likewise* also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

- These verses are almost a parallel of 2 Peter 2.
- It adds some more clarity by saying that they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and deny the Lord God and the Lord Jesus.
- God saved the people out of the land of Egypt, but afterward destroyed those who believed not. Then he says 'Likewise'-These people are doing the same type of thing and the verses show that they also will pay the price for their behavior.
- They were dead in their sins and revived by Christ in their new birth, but because they have

turned away from Christ, they are now dead again because they have forsaken Christ and the life he gives, they are now twice dead. These are reserved for darkness forever.

- The sin unto death is turning away from Christ and by word and deed showing that you despise the work that he has accomplished, deny that it has any meaning, and turn again to other beliefs. They become as mentioned in 1 John 2:18-19, anti-christs. John said not to pray for them and as the other scriptures show-they cannot be renewed to repentance, they are reserved unto darkness forever.
- Many people who have backslidden have misunderstood these verses and have felt that there was no hope for them. May we be able to share the Word of God clearly and concisely in order to give them hope and also be able to warn others who continue to practice sinning about the very real dangers that can result from it.