

HAMARTIOLOGY (25)

The only way an unbeliever can remedy his status before God is to believe. It is **only** faith in Jesus Christ which will move God to assess the unbeliever's condition differently (**John 3:16; Romans 3:26; 4:5; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8**).

If one refuses to believe on Jesus Christ and relies upon anything else to make him right with God (works, religion, accomplishments) the status remains the same - the person is "under sin" by the classification of God and is heading toward the condemnation of God.

Again Chafer is eloquent when he says: "... men are either lost, being under sin, which is to be meritless before God in the issues related to their salvation, or they are perfected forever in Christ by the saving grace of God, which salvation is divinely secured to all who believe" (*Ibid.* p. 320).

Satan is one who knows who is and who isn't a believer. Since he is out to deceive the whole world, the unbeliever is obviously much more susceptible to satanic deception (**Revelation 12:9; 20:3, 8**). Prior to one accepting Christ, the following realities are operative:

- 1) **II Corinthians 4:3-4** - The truth of the Gospel is hidden to those heading to hell because Satan is blinding their minds.
- 2) **Ephesians 2:1-2** - The entire direction of one's life is moving on a course being directed by Satan.
- 3) **Colossians 1:13** - The program that one is really part of is a satanic program and a kingdom of darkness.
- 4) **I John 5:19** - Every unbeliever in the world is under the power of Satan.

An unbeliever is in a terrible state. Satan's power is controlling the unbeliever and God's classification is damning the unbeliever. The only way out for the unbeliever is to believe on Jesus Christ and invite Him into his life. When one does this, God decrees an eternal status change that exists forever. Where is the power found that can produce this transformation? It is the Word of God - faith comes by hearing the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**).

QUESTION #13 – What is the relationship of a believer to sin?

The importance of this subject must never be minimized in the ministry of the local church. Although some do not like to hear teaching about sin, the truth is, this is a very critical matter to the local church for several reasons:

(Reason #1) - The majority of people in the church will be believers.

The Bible was given by God to develop the believer, not the unbeliever (**II Timothy 3:16-17**).

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(Reason #2) - One reason why believers will have problems is because of contact with sin.

The believer who sins and does not resolve it loses fellowship with God (**I John 1:3, 6-7**), joy (**I John 1:4**); fellowship with other believers (**I John 1:7**), a sense of security (**I John 2:5; 5:13**), confidence in prayer (**I John 3:19-22**), and joy at the thought of Christ's return (**I John 2:28**).

It is critical to the life of a believer that sin be exposed and eliminated, so it is imperative that a true church of God expound the Scriptures and give an accurate understanding of the doctrine of sin.

(Reason #3) - The believer's life is a constant struggle against sinful things. **Ephesians 6:12; I John 2:16**

(Reason #4) - Every believer will have moments of failure in sin. **Ecclesiastes 7:20; I John 1:8**

Dr. Chafer, in speaking about pastors who many times have to deal with sin and sin issues, said, "The soul doctor himself does not escape this conflict and sad indeed is his plight if he is so ignorant of the essential truths regarding the Christian's sin and its divinely provided cure, that he cannot diagnose even his own case or apply the healing to his own stricken heart" (*Ibid.* p. 325). Dr. Chafer's point is well made - it is imperative that leaders know the truth about sin for they are destined to have their own bouts with it, so they must know how to face it and deal with it so it does not fester and reach a level in which self-judgment is not enough.

(Reason #5) - Every believer must take care of his own sin problem. **Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10; I John 1:9-10**

There is no place in the New Testament where a child of God is encouraged to seek out a human priest or to go into some manmade confessional in order to find a cure for sin. Each and every believer is personally responsible to face up to and deal with his own sin problems, and each and every believer will personally be held accountable in regard to this. Failure to understand and personally apply this truth to one's own life will ultimately lead to some negative and devastating consequences.

It is extremely important for a believer to understand his relationship with God and with sin, for much in the Christian life hinges on this very issue.

QUESTION #14 – What are attitudes a believer must avoid when it comes to sin?

(Attitude #1) - A believer must avoid an attitude that thinks a believer is exempt from sin.

The theological name for this faulty line of thinking is perfectionism. Perfectionism is basically the belief that it is possible for the believer to live a sinlessly perfect life, completely exempt from sin, thus never sinning. This attitude is totally false and cannot be supported Biblically (**i.e. I John 1:8**).