

### Sin:

The Catholic Church teaches that sin... "is an offence against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods." (CCC #1849)

"...Sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from it... Sin is thus love of oneself even to contempt of God." (CCC #1850)

The Catholic Church also teaches that there are two types of actual sin, "Mortal" and "Venial".

### Mortal Sin:

Mortal sin is an actual sin that destroys sanctifying grace and causes the supernatural death of the soul.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church #1858*, a Mortal sin is defined as a "grave matter as specified by the Ten Commandments... The gravity is more or less great... One must also take into account who is wronged."

### Venial Sin:

Venial sin, as defined by the Catholic Church is an offence against God which does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace.

There are two situations in which the Catholic Church teaches that venial sins are committed. 1. We violate divine law with full or partial knowledge and consent. 2. We disobey an objectively grave precept, but due to invincible ignorance we think the obligation is not serious.

The Biblical basis for the Catholic Church's teaching on this comes from this verse:

*1John 5:16*... "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."

### Original Sin:

The Roman Catholic Church also teaches that there is another sin.... "Original sin"

"All men are implicated in Adam's sin, as St. Paul affirms: "By one man's disobedience many (that is, all men) were made sinners": "sin came into the world

through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." (CCC #289)

The Apostle contrasts the universality of sin and death with the universality of salvation in Christ. "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (CCC #402)

### Examination of Conscience:

*2Cor. 13:5* "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..."

Let us now examine our own conscience.

Our Conscience is the part of our mind, which God created in us to convey the truth of the law.

Sin cannot be a matter of conscience, as we ourselves can ignore the truth until our conscience is "seared with a hot iron" (*1Tim. 4:2*), or in other words, permanently damaged.

In the event that a person's conscience has been damaged, the law remains the same. The fact that a person makes a conscious decision to ignore the Holy Spirit speaking through their conscience does not affect what is, or is not sinful. So, what we really need to examine, is whether or not we are accepting God's truth about sin, and that our conscience has not been altered to deny the truth.

### Truth:

*1John 2:16* says "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world.

Jesus, when he was tempted of the devil, was tempted in each of these three areas. (*Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12, 13, Luke 4:1-13*)

All sin stems from one of these three general areas. Let's see what else the Bible teaches about sin:

*1John 3:4* "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

*Romans 6:23* "For the wages of sin is death..."

If sin can be defined as the transgression of the law, and the wages of sin is death, then why does the Catholic Church teach that there are Venial sins?

As stated earlier, it is taught that a venial sin is when "we disobey an objectively grave precept, but due to invincible ignorance we think the obligation is not serious".

Remember, though, that sin cannot be a matter of conscience, but of truth. So, all sin, no matter how small, deserves the wages of death (*Romans 6:23*), regardless of how we view the severity of the sin. If this is the case, what does John mean when he states "there is a sin not unto death" in *1John 5:17*... The sin not unto death is sin committed by a person who has eternal life. In contrast, the sin unto death that is mentioned in *1John 5:16* is the lifelong rejection of Christ.

*1John 5:11* And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12 He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.** *13* These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

*John 3:18* says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

So, the only "Mortal sin, or sin unto death, is the failure to "believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God".

The Catechism of the Catholic Church names another type of sin, "Original Sin". The Bible never indicates to us that sin passed to all men by the imposition of Adams' sin, but states that death passed to all men...

*Rom 5:12* Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and **death** by sin; **and so death passed upon all men**, for that all have sinned:

*If you are guilty of sin, it is because you have sinned, not because someone else's sin was imputed to you. You have been separated from God, and you are dangerously close to eternity in hell. But there is hope...*

**over please**



## **Reconciliation:**

*Romans 6:23* "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Romans 5:16* "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the **free gift** is of many offences to justification."

Just as death was imputed to man as a result of Adams' sin, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to man when he accepts the **free gift**. Jesus Christ became the propitiation for our sins. He is the sacrifice provided by God (*Gen. 22:8*), offered as the complete sacrifice for sin.

*1John 2:2* "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

*Ephesians 1:7* "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

This sacrifice was so complete that there is nothing else we can do to obtain salvation, but to accept the "**free gift**".

The Catholic Church teaches that before a person can be accepted as a Christian they must partake of the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation. But according to the Bible, there is no required initiation. These sacraments, that the Catholic Church claims will bring grace are based on "works" (or acts that the penitent must perform in order to receive the grace of God), but, this is contradictory to the scripture (which by the way is the written Word of the One from whom the grace comes).

*Eph. 2:8* "For by grace are ye saved though faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

*Romans 11:6* "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

*Revelation 20:13-15* "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. *14.* And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. *15.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

If every man will be judged according to his works, and if grace cannot be obtained by works, then it stands to reason that, for a person's name to be written in the book of life and to be spared the torment of hell requires something other than works.

So, how do we receive this "**free gift**", and obtain the mercy God has offered through the blood of Jesus Christ? Well, the word of God tells us...

*Romans 10:9* "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, **thou shalt be saved.**"

*Romans 10:13* "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, **shall be saved.**"

Notice, in both of these verses, the phrase "shall be saved". God didn't say that you might be saved, or, if you're not baptized, you didn't partake of the Eucharist, or you're not confirmed you won't be saved...He said, **YOU SHALL BE SAVED!**

If you would like to have assurance that you will go to heaven when you die, and know that you are saved, you can call upon the Lord, and say something like this...

***"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I can do nothing to earn my way to heaven. I accept the payment you made for my sins when you died on the cross for me. Please forgive me of my sins and take me to heaven when I die. Amen."***

If you just prayed that prayer, and you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, **YOU ARE SAVED!**

*Romans 10:10* "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

J. W. Hardin

If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, or you have any questions regarding this tract we would like to talk to you, please contact:

# **AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

**A discussion on "Mortal and Venial Sin" as taught by the Roman Catholic Church.**