

Now Concerning Spiritual Things

an historical account of one man's walk with God

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JESUS OF NAZARETH Part Two

One day the Lord said to me, "The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is a microcosm of the Church." My definition of a microcosm in this case is "an encapsulated miniature." If you can accept the fact that the Lord said these words to me, then you will understand that there is a huge gap between what Jesus did in His three and one-half years of personal ministry compared with the conduct and practice of the Church today. There are six problems in *the gap* I would like to explore with you. One of them is sin. What is sin? Is it an option or an inevitability? What do some dedicated, mature Christians say about sin? Is it a sin to make a mistake? Is there a difference between sin and a mistake? Is there scripture available to solve this dilemma? Come along with me and let's explore the *matter of sin* and other contents of *the gap*.

The place to look for what Jesus said about sin is the Gospels. But before we zero in on what He said, let's look at other places first.

(1) The matter of sin

I have heard mature, well-meaning, dedicated, born-again servants of God speak of and teach on sin in what appears to be an apology or justification for the inevitability of sin as an on-going reality in the life of Christians today.

If we want to talk about sin from the apparent beginning as recorded in the Bible, Lucifer seems to be the first guilty party. He initially was an anointed Cherub of God, the seal of His perfection, perfect in beauty and full of wisdom, with authority over the pre-Adamic earth. The record then reveals that he sinned, caused the violent destruction of the earth by God, was cast out of the third heaven to become God's antithesis and man's enemy as Satan.¹ It appears that God's conclusion was to rub out and start over again, something He has done more than once.

The creation of the perfect pre-Adamic earth is recorded in Genesis 1:1; the destruction of the perfect earth by the first worldwide flood is recorded in Genesis

1:2 and the beginning of the restoration and preparation of the replenished earth for Adam is recorded in Genesis 1:3. Now fast forward to the record in Genesis chapter three wherein Adam and his wife, two perfect and perfectly formed (created) human beings encountered Satan who was (and still is) smarter and more subtle than they were. The two were created to live forever, conditioned on one provision: Obedience to God's prohibition not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die,"² God said. Both Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instructions³ and thereafter Satan, woman, man, the heavens and the earth have endured the *consequences of that one sin* for almost six thousand years. From the Bible record one may conclude that all of the difficulty and evil man has encountered on the earth since Adam may be traced to that one sin. In view of this fact, before you determine that one must inevitably sin in order to live on this earth, think very carefully about the consequences of one sin – Adam's sin – before we further explore the *matter of sin* and its reality in the world in which we live.

When Adam sinned, his life support system (his spiritual umbilical cord) which was attached to God was severed. Good and evil were then immediately diffused within him so that he could not distinguish between the two and became lost.⁴ That's what sin does. That's what it did to Adam and that's what it does to man today. Adam did not have to sin. He had a choice. Continued sin may eventually harden one's heart (God's compass) so that he becomes impervious to God's conscience Director (the Holy Spirit).⁵ More about sin and how to deal with it later in this letter.

Adam was God's prototype for mankind. As Adam goes, so goes mankind; this was God's endowment in Adam. Neither Lucifer nor Adam was created to fail. God wanted both to succeed. If the first Adam had been

²Genesis 2:17(b).

³Eve was deceived by Satan in her disobedience. Adam disobeyed knowingly and therefore was accountable to God for his deliberate disobedience. It is important to note that *deliberate disobedience is God's definition of sin* as found on page three, column one of this letter.

⁴The Lord gave me this explanation of the first sin.

⁵See Hebrews 6:4-6.

¹See Isaiah 14:12-30; Ezekiel 28:12(a)-19; Jeremiah 4:23-26. For a more in-depth study of this subject, see my letter #16 dated January 10, 1999, entitled, "Earth 101."

like the last Adam there would have been no need for the last Adam. God's way for His creation was to be governed from the heart by love as free moral agents. In order to obey from the heart one must have the freedom to disobey; hence the reason for the failure of Lucifer and Adam. Disobedience is called sin.

The prophet Malachi wrote, "I am the Lord, I do not change."⁶ In talking to me one day, God said, "I, the Lord God do not change. I change My mind but not My objective." God has changed His mind many times, **but not His objective**. The pre-Adamic world and its inhabitants, Lucifer, the fallen angels, Adam, Noah's flood and the destruction of Nineveh are only a few of the times He has changed His mind but *not His objective*.⁷ His objective is to restore fallen mankind, the heavens and the earth to their position and condition prior to the sin of Adam. And as He has said to me, "This time I will not fail. I will succeed, but this time it will be done in stages through My only Son." This is not to imply that God failed for He did not. Those chosen by Him are the ones who failed – who sinned.

Here is what the Lord has said to me concerning changing His mind about me:

"When your dreams enlarge, so must My plans for you. For that reason, as one grows and responds by faith to My guidance, I must change My mind as well, to fit the faith objective of My servant. You see, free will does not remove or change My word, but confirms it. I remain fluid in My reaction to the requests of My servants. That is My allowance for growth. **It thrills Me to see the need for Me to change My mind to accommodate the bold request of a servant!**"

The apostle John's concept of sin

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us **from all sin**. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we *have not sinned*, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." (1 John 1:7-10).

"My little children, these things I write to you, **so that you may not sin**. And **if** anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He himself is the propitiation *for our sins*, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him." (1 John 2:1-5.).

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins

has neither seen Him nor known Him." (1 John 3:6).

"Whoever is born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:9).

John was special

From these scriptures we find that John's concept of sin is different from that of many of God's servants today. Here are several things about John that are apparent from a close reading of the Gospels: John's relationship with Jesus was different from His relationship with any other disciple. Five times in John's Gospel He speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."⁸ None of the other three Gospel writers refers to himself in like manner. John apparently chose this way to refer to himself without writing his name in the record. This alone tells you something about John's character. Look carefully at what John writes about love, sin, the Holy Spirit and things omitted by the other Gospel writers. It will then become apparent that John spent some time alone with Jesus Who said some **special** things to him that were not said to the other disciples. From the historical records available, it appears that John was the only apostle who did not die a violent death.

The last book in the canon of scripture is unique as a stand-alone book in the New Testament. It contains many things, not found as succinctly in the Old Testament or in the rest of the New Testament, which so effectively references words of Old Testament prophets concerning the end-times. The book is unique in several respects. It was to John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was imprisoned on Patmos Island "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," to whom "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" was given. The Lord Jesus has mentioned to me the uniqueness of John's writing and said that "Many of the things John recorded were things the other eleven were not ready for. It was not that I favored him over the others," He said, "but that John favored Me over the others, even as you do, My son."

Words of Jesus on sin

Jesus went by the pool of Bethesda one day and found a man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years because of sin. Jesus healed him. Later when Jesus found the man in the temple, He said to him, "See, you have been made well. **Sin no more** lest a worse thing come upon you."⁹

The scribes and the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery and said, "The Law of Moses says to stone her, but what do you say?" The delayed response of Jesus was, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." One by one the woman's accusers then turned and walked away. When there was no one left to accuse her, Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you, go and **sin no more**."¹⁰

It is obvious, even to a casual reader of the scripture, that since Jesus on the other side of the cross told a man and a

⁶Malachi 3:6 (a).

⁷Katherine Kuhlman ministered in the Statler-Hilton hotel ballroom in downtown Dallas in the late 60's or early 70's. While she was ministering in one session, she said her ministry was offered to three different men who turned it down. God changed His mind on that ministry three times.

⁸See John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20.

⁹See John 5:1-14.

¹⁰See John 8:3-11.

woman to *sin no more*, that attainment is also possible on this side of the cross. In an effort to resolve the problem of sin, I asked the Lord for a definition of sin. Here is His answer. The statements seem to be redundant, but here they are with only slight editing by myself.

God's definition of sin

"Sin is *deliberately* disobeying God.

"Sin is deliberately doing what you know God does not want you to do.

"Inadvertent mistakes *are not sin*.

"Mistakes *made in the flesh* that do not deliberately disavow God and deliberately disavow His instructions *are not sin*.

"God has a short memory on mistakes (His words to me previously).

"Whatever is not of faith is sin but sin is *deliberately disobeying* that which you know is God's will. My son see what *one sin* caused in Adam.

"Sin is deliberately disobeying that which God has told you to do or deliberately doing that which God has instructed you not to do.

"*Sin is deliberately disobeying God.*"

Since in this definition of sin, there is a distinction made between sin and mistakes, let's see if we can define "mistakes." Here, in brief, is one example of what God has said to me about the distinction between sin and mistakes

Mistakes defined

Abram (before his name was changed to Abraham) had an attractive wife. As recorded in Genesis chapter twelve, God called Abram to leave his country, his family and his father's house and go to a land God would show him. In the pilgrimage Abram then started, while they were in Egypt (because of famine) Pharaoh, king of Egypt, saw Sarai and wanted to add her to his harem. In a plot agreed to by both Abram and Sarai, Abram lied¹¹ and said that Sarai was his sister and agreed that Pharaoh could take her into his harem. When this happened, the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues. Although the bible record is not clear on this detail, it appears to be evident that before there was any sexual union with Sarai, God told Pharaoh that the plagues were caused by his recent harem addition, who indeed was Abram's wife. Pharaoh was incensed, chewed out Abram for his deception, told him to take Sarai and all his possessions and "go your way!" An interesting thing to me about this incident is Pharaoh's relationship with Jehovah God while idol worship was prevalent in Egypt at that time.

A similar incident occurred after God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah and the Lord again protected them from sexual impurity.¹² The Lord said to me that *these two lies were not sin*, they were mistakes and here is why:

When they occurred, Abram and Sarai (and later Abraham and Sarah) were childless. Since God had told

Abram that He would bless him so that his descendants would become a great nation, Abram felt an obligation to preserve himself to produce an heir in order to confirm God's promise. For that reason, Abram and later Abraham was doing *in the flesh* that which both he and his wife considered adequate strategy to preserve his life in order to produce the heir promised by God. These two lies were told to two kings at a time when a king's word was absolute law and to disagree with a king might mean your life. For example, about fourteen hundred years later, a young woman danced in front of a king who asked her what she wanted. Her reply was the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The king promptly dispatched a contingent of his soldiers to the jail where John was imprisoned, cut off his head and delivered it to the young woman on a platter.¹³

That's how dangerous it was to disagree with a king even hundreds of years after the two episodes Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah had with two kings. And that's why God said to me that these were mistakes and not sin. Both parties were attempting to protect Abram/Abraham and his seed *in the flesh* for that which was prophesied to him by God. Years ago I had a tendency to place a halo on certain bible characters, but no more. They all faced the same problems of life as the rest of us, including the apostles. The halo is reserved for One Person.

God has also said to me that Abram/Abraham experienced a learning curve like other men, including myself, even though He is listed as a legend of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven.

(2) Subservience to the Father

This problem in *the gap* is characterized by Jesus. Few of us as believers have progressed to the point of being totally subservient to the Father as was Jesus in His personal ministry. This conclusion was emphasized in my last *letter*¹⁴ wherein from scripture references it was obvious that Jesus (1) had no authority but that which He was given by the Father, and (2) even the words He said (past tense – logos) and spoke (present tense – rhema) came from the Father. We must emulate His example if we are to participate in the greatest harvest of souls ever prior to the Rapture, wherein John 14:12 will become a reality in one's life, about which I have written. To emphasize this the Lord said to me, "The eleventh commandment is 'If you don't know, ask Me,' and the twelfth is, 'Learn to listen.'" This does not refer to occasional impartations from the Holy Spirit which most Charismatics receive, but to hear from Him continually. Obedience to the two new commandments have changed my life forever. Part of the manna hidden in that obedience is a growth in faith which opens the door to the supernatural. Faith comes by hearing.

(3) The threefold measure

This problem in *the gap* was given to me several years ago. The Lord gave me these three measures of the life of a

¹¹While it is true that Sarai was Abram's half-sister, that was a partial truth and a partial truth is still a lie.

¹²See Genesis chapter 20 for this complete story.

¹³See John 14:6-12.

¹⁴See my May *letter* dated May 22, 2006, entitled, **JESUS OF NAZARETH**, page two, column one.

believer, a pastor, a church or any entity which bears the name of Christ: (1) He must be first in everything, (2) one must be guided continually by His rhema word and (3) He must get the praise, glory and honor. If we fail in one, we fail in all three. Although we have references to such a guided life in the Bible, it is my observation that each of these may have to come by revelation of the Holy Spirit. That is the way it has been in my life. I erroneously thought I could make each of these decisions intellectually, but I was wrong. Only after I had learned to listen to Him continually, did I find that His revelation was necessary for me to understand and become obedient to His threefold measures of my life.

(4) Be bold in prayer

Another problem hidden in *the gap* is boldness in prayer. When the Lord instructed me ten years ago to be bold in prayer, I thought this was a simple assignment. Time has proven otherwise. It was not until the Lord taught me that I had to ask for my inheritance in the kingdom, and explained to me what that meant, that I began to experience unusual spiritual growth. That continues to this very day and the best is yet to come, as the Lord has said to me. Hearing rhema words from the Lord on a continual basis cannot be overemphasized. In my walk with God, two keys to being bold in prayer turned out to be (1) “You have not because you ask not”¹⁵ as James wrote and (2) these words the Lord spoke to me, “My son if I gave you these things (great spiritual blessings for yourself) before you ask, it would open the door to pride. But if you ask Me and I then give them to you, it will slam the door in the face of the enemy and give Me the praise, glory and honor.” After that I was on my way, big time! And growth in this area continues, although my first instruction to be bold in prayer came ten years ago! A key to boldness in prayer is hearing rhema words from God, for as you do so, your faith grows and as your faith grows, so does your boldness in prayer. Each provides impetus for the other. You might be surprised at some of my prayers boldly prayed in faith which comes from hearing. Everyone in whom the Holy Spirit dwells has the capability to hear rhema words from God.

(5) Obedience

Of course, this problem in *the gap* is the key to all spiritual growth. Almost immediately after my Holy Spirit baptism, the Lord spoke to me in that still small voice and said, “Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken (listen and obey) than the fat of rams.”¹⁶ Although I have learned much from Him in the ensuing forty years, that was the scripture He saw fit to give me first. Last year I taught a series of lessons in our Church on “How to hear the voice of the Lord.” Months later I was talking to someone who was in my classes and asked him about a specific thing the Lord had instructed me to do, which I had taught in one of the class sessions. The reply I got was, “I just am not there yet,” meaning this person did not yet have the courage of being obedient which was a key to spiritual growth. I learned years

ago that even though obedience carries risk, the risk of disobedience may come at a greater price. Obedience may cause the Lord to instruct us to give up something or to do something we haven’t done before – it’s called change. But whatever the change, it will always lead to blessings greater than we could imagine. Serving Him is the greatest honor and brings eternal rewards.

(6) Be ye perfect

The admonition to be perfect is another problem hidden in *the gap*. Here are a few New Testament scriptures admonishing us to be perfect as believers referenced to the Greek meanings in Strong’s Concordance:

Strong’s #739: 2 Timothy 3:17.

Strong’s #2675: 2 Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 5:10.

Strong’s #5046: Matthew 5:48; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 4:12.

Strong’s # 5048: 2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 5:9; John 17:23.

The common meaning of these four Greek words that are translated as “perfect” in English is “complete.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of “perfect” is also “complete.”

Here is a rhema word God gave me on “Be ye perfect” the morning of March 9, 2001:

“Be aggressive in what you pray – not in what you do. The ‘being’ exceeds the ‘doing.’ When that is the case, then **I can direct you**. When you think ‘to do’ first, the ‘doing’ takes precedence. This must not be. The ‘being’ must take precedence. Then My will, My way can expediently come to pass. Only as you seek Me and My face first may I guide and direct you. It has always been that way.

“My admonition was ‘Be ye therefore perfect,’¹⁷ not ‘do perfect things.’ For when your fellowship is with Me first, the guidance is free to flow. And that is the way to be perfect. When you discern My will and act on My instructions, **then what you do is perfect because it is My will**. To be in and to walk in My perfect will is My desire for My servants. That way everyone in the circle is blessed.”

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¹⁵See James 4:2 (b), KJV.

¹⁶1 Samuel 15:22 (b), KJV.

¹⁷Matthew 5:48, KJV.