

## HORRIBLENESS OF SIN

How do you view sin? What do you consider to be the worst thing about sin? I am sure these questions bring certain situations to mind.

It may be we think of the death of some innocent child or family as the result of some drunken driver causing a fatal accident. Or we may be thinking about the story we read in the newspaper about a little child dying as a result of child abuse from an evil parent. I would be the first to acknowledge that the physical consequences of sin are often horrible, however not all sin has such physical consequences. In fact, many sins bring temporary pleasure, gain and enjoyment to the participant (see Hebrews 11:24-26). This fact should impress upon our mind that the real horribleness of sin is not the physical consequences (however devastating they may be) one may suffer.

David recognized the real horribleness of sin after he was guilty of taking another man's wife and, eventually, his life. There were many physical consequences of his sin, however, when David repented of his sins he makes no mention of any of the physical consequences of the sins. He said, *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"* (Psalm 51:1-4). David recognized that the thing that is so horrible about sin is the fact that it is AGAINST GOD.

When the young man, Joseph, had been the victim of the envy and jealousy of his brothers and, as a slave in Egypt, was pressured by his master's wife to commit an act of immorality, said, *"Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:8,9). Had Joseph committed this sin he would have violated his master's trust and, no doubt, would have suffered severe physical consequences. Or he may have avoided certain physical suffering (his later imprisonment because she lied on him) had he yielded. Joseph's number one concern was his relationship to God. He knew what each of us needs to understand; sin is AGAINST GOD.

Until we recognize this fact we will never truly repent of any sin. Paul was thankful the Corinthians learned this lesson. He had rebuked them for many sins, including their failure to deal with an immoral man in their midst (1 Corinthians 5). When he wrote the second letter to them they had corrected many of the things for which Paul had rebuked them. What brought about this change? Paul said, *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."* (2 Corinthians 7:9,10).

A person may change his life for the better because he is truly sorry for what he has done. He may have been a drunkard and now suffers severe health problems. He may have committed some crime that resulted in his spending time in jail. Being sorry for having done the things that brought about such physical consequences and punishment, he may determine that he will never be guilty of drunkenness again or will never commit any crime that would result in his being imprisoned. This change in life may result in many improvements in his physical life and others may

benefit from the change, however he may die a drunkard and guilty of the crimes he had committed in the past because he never truly repented of such.

Isaiah declared, "*Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*" (Isaiah 59:1,2). This is what is so horrible about sin. It separates us from God. When we are truly sorry that we have acted against God and violated His will we will be motivated by that godly sorrow to repent.

*✍ James Hahn*