



Some Things Sin Will Not Cover

By Keith Greer

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." {Psalm 32:1,2} What does the word "cover" mean? Vine says "to cover up or over." Paul quoted the Psalmist in Romans 4:7. In that passage, Paul discussed the faith and works of righteousness of the great patriarch Abraham. Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). As long as one is guilty of sin, he stands condemned before God. Yet, when a person's sins are "covered," they are forgiven. In other words, these sins are hidden as though they had not been committed. "Taken away" may be a better explanation. So, we must ask: "what can cover man's sins?"

The answer varies, depending on the religion of the person you ask. This question may be better answered by listing some things that cannot cover sin, even though some believe they do.

The blood of bulls and goats cannot cover sin. "But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." {Hebrews 10:3,4} The animal sacrifices offered under the Law of Moses could not totally relieve man's sin problem. "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." {Hebrews 10:11} Animal sacrifices were temporary and had to be offered on a continuing basis. The Hebrew writer tells us they "foreshadowed" the bull sacrifice that would come to be offered to "cover" our sins. Why then did they offer the animal sacrifices? Offering the animal-blood sacrifices demonstrated obedience to, and faith in, God. It also placed them in position to benefit from the blood sacrificed by Jesus Christ. How? The blood

that flowed from Calvary's cross saves ALL men. When our Lord sacrificed His life on Calvary's tree, He validated every animal sacrifice and was accepted by God -- covering all sin. The animal blood served a purpose, but its offering was never intended to cover sin.

The love of God does not cover sin. Yes, God does love man, but that love alone does not cover sin. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." {John 3:16} Notice the words "should not" in this passage. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." {2 Peter 3:9} No one denies that God loves all men and wants them be saved. But His love is not a means of covering sin. Some say that God loves man too much to allow him to perish because of his sin. "Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off." {Romans 11:22} Man must decide how much he loves God (Matthew 22:37-40).

God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to earth to provide the means for man's sin to be forgiven and covered. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." {Romans 5:8,9} Love provided the remedy for the sin problem. But that love alone was never intended to cover the sin.

Geographical space does not cover sin. Can one run away and hide from God? Moving away does not relieve the need to be forgiven of sin. When Jonah tried to run from God, he discovered the futility of such an endeavor. {Jonah 1:1-3} "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out." {Numbers 32:23} Sin is a transgression of God's law, wherever the sinner may be (1 John 3:4). God knows all of man's works. "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." {Hebrews 4:13} "The Lord looks from heaven and sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants on the earth." {Psalm 33:13,14}

Good morals cannot cover sin. So many in the world believe and accept that if one is morally good, the God of heaven will overlook his imperfections and sin. The Bible gives us a resounding answer to this conclusion through the example of a man named Cornelius. "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always." {Acts 10:1,2} Who could say that Cornelius wasn't a good moral person? But if that made him okay in God's sight, why did He send Peter to him? "...Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." {Acts 11:13,14} Something must have been lacking in this man's life. Please understand, God requires that all of His children have good morals. But morality will not COVER one sin.

The prayer of the non-Christian cannot cover sin. "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him." {John 9:31} Does this mean that God does not hear the words of men who pray to Him? No, as previously stated, He hears and sees all that men do. But God is not obligated, nor has He promised to answer the prayers of those who are not in His family (His children). Prayer is a blessing and privilege afforded to God's children. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are opened to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." {1 Peter 3:12} God commands His children to make their requests known to Him (Philippians 4:6). A non-Christian may pray fervently and long for God to cover his sin, but this is not the means through which it can be accomplished.

Time does not cover sin. Man is a forgetful being, and many things tend to slip through his mind and be forgotten. God has no such "time period" after which He automatically forgets. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." {Matthew 12:36,37} God has a long memory. If you doubt this, remember the people of Amalek who would not allow God's people safe passage through their land after they fled Egypt. What happened in 1 Samuel 15, hundreds of years later? God sent Saul in to destroy them. Why? "Thus says the LORD

of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.' {1 Samuel 15:2} God has a long memory.

The non-Christian's confession cannot cover his sin. Acknowledging guilt and accountability for our actions is commendable. Yet, in and of itself this cannot cover sin. "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." {2 Corinthians 7:9,10} A person can be sorry -- sorry he/she got caught -- while not having the true type of sorrow that leads to repentance. We need to confess Christ. "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." {Romans 10:9,10} Confession leads us in a direction that can eventually result in our sins being covered.

Faith alone cannot cover sin. The majority of the religious world believes that faith in Christ is sufficient to "cover" the sins we commit. We must have faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." {Hebrews 11:6} Undoubtedly, we must have faith. But will faith alone cover our sins? "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." {James 2:17,18} The bible always portrays faith as obedient. In order for man's faith to provide the sought-after cover for his sin, that faith must motivate him to do the things God requires. Let me make this point as clear as I can -- nothing, I mean nothing, alone can cover sin!

What then will cover our sins? First, we must be truly converted to Christ. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." {Acts 3:19} We cannot come to Christ unless we really do intend to change our lives. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." {2 Corinthians 5:17}

True love for God heads us in the right direction to have our sins covered. The only way we demonstrate this love is by willingly obeying ALL of God's commands (John 14:15; Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23, 24-27; 1 John 5:2,3). Love for God brings with it a fervent desire to accomplish whatever is required to gain the results we are seeking.

Finally, to have our sins covered, we must contact the blood of Christ. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." {Ephesians 1:7} "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." {Revelation 1:5} When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:1-7). This is important. It is the only way for the sin-stained soul to contact the blood of Christ, and that WILL COVER the sins! Dear reader, are your sins covered by the blood of the Lamb?