

The Darkness of Sin

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The Puritans preached often on the doctrine of the sinfulness of sin. Yet, it is a neglected doctrine today. For to study the nature of sin is to be familiar with our own wicked hearts and Satan, the enemy of our souls. Sin was the reason for the cross and the death of Christ. But there was a darkness associated with Calvary. This is seen in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 23 and verse 44-45. "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst."

The gospels of Matthew and Mark state that at this time when Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Like I said, there was a darkness associated with Calvary. It was an eerie darkness, it was the darkness of sin. Here was the time when the sins of the world were heavy upon Christ on the cross and the wrath of the Father was on Christ as he hung on that bloody cross. He was alone during this time and it was the most intense time of his agony for he suffered for the first time in his existence, the turned face of the Father. This was the darkness that veiled the awfulness of that hour. A holy God could not look upon sin and he turned his holy Face away from his beloved Son who hung in agony upon a scandalous cross as a substitute for sin.

The passage states that darkness was all over the earth, not just in Jerusalem, not just in the Middle East but all over the earth. And that all the earth felt the judgment of hell that day and all the earth since the pangs of a broken hearted God over his suffering Son for wicked man's sins. There was a darkness over all the earth. The sun was darkened. This was a time when normally the sun would shining at its peak from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon, the sunniest part of the day. The Ethiopic versions render this passage, "And when it was noon the sun was darkened and the whole world was darkened until the ninth hour."

This darkness was a preternatural eclipse of the sun for it lasted three hours whereas a natural eclipse of the sun is but of short duration. This eclipse was seen and reported by other nations as it occurred. It is reported that a heathen saw in Egypt and said, "Either the divine being suffers or suffers with him that suffers or the frame of the world is dissolving."

Allow me to read you the commentary on this striking passage, on this unusual time of darkness, from the pen of the eminent scholar, John Gill. "This darkness that was over the

earth at the time of Christ's sufferings was no doubt in addition to them. The sun, as it were, hiding its face and refusing to afford it comforting light and heat to him. And yet, might be a detestation of the heinousness of the sin the Jews were committing and as expressed about the divine anger and resentment, for God's purposes and decrees and the end he had in view did not excuse nor extenuate their wickedness. As it shows also, the wretched stupidity not to be awakened and convinced by the amazing darkness with other things attending it, which made no impression on them. Though it did on the Roman centurion who concluded Christ must be the Son of God. It was an emblem of the judicial blindness and darkness of the Jewish nation and signified that now was the hour and power of darkness or the time for the prince of darkness with his principalities and powers to exert himself."

We see friends, that this time of darkness when Christ was on the cross, is a very picture of the darkness of sin. The kingdom of evil is the kingdom of darkness. Satan is the prince of darkness and sin is his evil tool to damn the souls of men and rob God of his glory.

O friends, if we could only see the terribleness of sin, the awful blackness and darkness of sin. Sin opposed to light. Sin in opposition to a holy God. Sin in the heart of rebellious mankind.

Before we proceed with our study of the darkness of sin, I would like to recommend two books to you. I strongly recommend their study for they have been of immense help to myself and thousands of other Christians around the world. Please, go out and obtain these two books and take the time to read them and you will better understand both Satan and his wiles and the nature of sin. Both of the authors were Puritans. The first book I highly recommend to you is by Thomas Brooks. It is entitled "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices." The second book is really two volumes into one. It is by William Gurnall and it is entitled "The Christian in Complete Armor." It is an exposition of Ephesians chapter 6 and I read it every day and I obtain much value from it.

For we must study our adversary to recognize his devices against us. And we must be well familiar with the wicked windings of our own deceitful hearts. And we must thoroughly understand the doctrine of the sinfulness of sin so that we will flee from it and avoid it.

I would like, now, to point out the next aspect of the darkness of sin. And we must go back to the book of Genesis to see this aspect of the darkness of sin in judgment. In Genesis chapter 1, verse 1 and 2 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Some scholars hold to what is called "the gap theory." The gap theory states that Genesis 1:1 describes an original creation which was followed by the fall of Satan and great judgment. Genesis 1:2 is the supposed description of a recreation or restoration. God saw the earth void with a darkness upon it from chaos and sin. And God and his Spirit brooded over it as a mother hen broods over her baby chicks or a new mother who leans over the crib of a sick baby

and her mother's heart broods over the condition of that sick child. This is the imagery here, darkness over all because of sin. A dark void because of judgment from God on sin. So this is a very picture of the doctrine of the darkness of sin. Well, whether the gap theory is correct or not, I do not know but I do know that when sin is mentioned in the scriptures, there attends it a suggestive veil of darkness.

This passage in Genesis alludes to darkness from judgment. In Genesis chapter 3 which depicts the fall of man, we see sin appearing as the darkness of separation of man and God, where fellowship is broken, severed by sin. A darkness clouds the previous sunlit paths of Eden where God and Adam walked together in the cool of the day. After the fall, man no longer desires to walk with God but hides from him because of sin. We find Adam hiding behind a tree hoping God won't see him in his disobedience from sin. Sin had cast a long shadow on man's close fellowship with God. Adam answers a questioning God and he said, "I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself." Afraid? Adam was never afraid of God before he sinned. Perhaps had he been more afraid of God before he sinned he may not have sinned. But he rebelled against God's command and sinned and now fear grips his heart and he no longer desires to walk with God. Harmony has been destroyed through sin.

And where there once was light now darkness casts its pall over that relationship. Mankind is now under the condemnation of God and must be reconciled to God or face eternal damnation because of the black, black darkness of sin. A veil of darkness settled on the soul of Adam that day as he was cast out of Eden and out from close fellowship with God. And every man born into this world has a natural inclination in his heart to rebel against God and the light of the gospel because of the darkness of Satan's kingdom and sin.

Let us look further at the darkness of sin as seen in the life of Samson. Samson was a man who could remove the gates of the city and carry them away on his shoulders. He could slay a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, with no more effort than shaking himself. But a day came to Samson when he broke the trust and covenant of God. And Judges 16, verses 20-21 states, "And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."

Samson experienced the darkness of sin as his eyes were pulled out and permanent blindness put him into a world of darkness. He couldn't even see his hand in front of his face. And this physical darkness had attached to it spiritual darkness for the text says, "The Lord was departed from him." And we see that he is now enslaved by the Philistines with unbreakable chains of brass, to do their bidding and grind their meal.

Sin will make a slave out of you, friend. Sin will blind you. Sin will make you a servant of Satan. O, the terrible darkness of sin!

Our last example today from scripture on the darkness of sin is found in the life of King David. When one studies the first ten chapters of 2 Samuel we see King David in a life favored by God. God attends his victories, God prospers David, God makes David king over Judah and king over Israel and gives him favor with the people and his enemies come to fear him. God's hand is with David and multiplied blessings. In 2 Samuel, chapter 5, verse 10 summarizes this, "And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

We see that God was with David in these first ten chapters of 2 Samuel, blessing him, giving him victory after victory as he is the recipient of God's favor. But then David takes his eyes off of God and sins in his heart while he stands on his roof lusting after the lovely Bathsheba as she bathes herself underneath the moonlight. And in that moment the light of David's reason is blinded by sin and darkness enters his soul as the spiritual darkness befalls him, as we see in chapter 11. And as chapter 11 speaks of material bankruptcy in life, we see the spiritual bankruptcy of King David played out in chapter 11 of 2 Samuel as he commits adultery with Bathsheba. And the sin of adultery which David commits is an aggravated sin in the sight of God because David has sinned against God's favor and blessings. And this aggravated sin leads David on a moral descent into murder. He murders the unsuspecting Uriah, Bathsheba's husband.

And we read in 2 Samuel, chapter 11, verse 27, one of the saddest verses in the saddest chapter in the life of King David, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." The darkness of sin allowed David's conscience to excuse him rather than accuse him and he descends into one of the blackest periods of his life. He still represents the people of God as their leader but his heart is far away from God. There is a long black shadow on his life now which will have destructive effects upon his own family and kingdom. His daughter will be raped through incest, his favorite son, Absalom, will turn against him and be killed. The darkness of sin has cast a dark shadow over King David's family because the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

David not only commits adultery and murder, but he ends up being a thief because sin robs God of the glory due him. O, the terrible darkness of sin and its consequences! One has only to read Psalm 52 and hear David lament, "Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Sin gave David fleeting pleasures but it stole his joy in the Lord. And that's what sin does, friends. Satan is a destroyer. Satan is a deceiver. Satan is a divider, he wants to divide us from God. He wants to destroy our families and our testimony for God. When the darkness of sin falls upon a man, his reason is all gone. It took Nathan, the prophet, to bring David to his senses with the story of the poor man and his little lamb.

Listen to this litany of destruction and chaos which resulted from David's sin and listen, also, to the missed blessings which God withheld from David because of his aggravated sin. "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto

thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.”

Although King David repented of his sins and returned to God with a broken heart, he still had to live with the consequences of his sins. The long shadow of the darkness of sin plagued him with a sword that God said would never depart from his house.

Dear friends, this doctrine of the sinfulness of sin is a terrible doctrine to behold if you wish to spend much time on it because of its unpleasantness. But I must preach the full counsel of God and I must declare the sinfulness of sin in the allusion to the darkness of sin as I have laid out before you today.

Let us never forget that sin does the following: sin robs God of the glory he deserves, sin withholds blessings from God on us, sin renders us useless for present service, sin breaks our intimate fellowship with God, sin deadens our conscience so we can see further and fall into a deeper moral decline, sin shuts down our effectiveness as intercessors, sin makes the Bible a closed book before us, sin ruins our testimony and witness and sin can bring harm to our families as the protective hedge from God is let down and sin makes us servants of Satan. Sin is the devil's wrecking ball. But most of all, friends, sin sent Jesus to the cross and our sins nailed him to that bloody tree. Sin is costly. It cost Christ his very blood and when we sin, we trample that blood.

It is my prayer that this message will keep you from sin and it will be an aid to you as you walk in holiness before a holy God who hates sin. May the darkness of sin keep its long shadows from you as you serve the Lord with all your heart. Amen.