

# IS IGNORANCE SINFUL? Lesson One

## By Donald Townsley

1. The meaning of "IGNORANCE": "*Not to know; destitute of knowledge; want of knowledge*"
2. Many in the church and out of the church believe that God will excuse sins that are committed in ignorance.
3. In spite of this ATTITUDE AND BELIEF found among men, the Bible DOES NOT teach this doctrine.

### I. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE SINS OF IGNORANCE

1. Paul said the Gentiles "*Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the IGNORANCE that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*" --Eph. 4:18
  - (1) Paul said IGNORANCE was the cause of the Gentiles being alienated from God.
  - (2) So IGNORANCE was and is sinful.
  - (3) Think of the people today alienated from the life of God through the IGNORANCE that is in them.
2. Peter said, "*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your IGNORANCE*" --I Pet. 1:14
  - (1) Peter here points out they were guilty of LUSTS IN IGNORANCE.
  - (2) Paul described these who lived this kind of life as "*children of disobedience*"-- Eph. 2:2; 5:5 - 6; Col. 3: 5 - 6
  - (3) They now were obedient children and saved from past sins of lust in IGNORANCE.
  - (4) But, they were not to go back to the former lusts of IGNORANCE.
3. Jesus prayed for forgiveness for those that crucified him in IGNORANCE -- Luke 23:34
  - (1) This shows they needed mercy and forgiveness even though they were IGNORANT.
  - (2) Peter said the Jews "*through IGNORANCE*" . . . "*killed the Lord*" -- Acts 3: 17
  - (3) Peter then set forth the conditions of salvation to those who had sinned through IGNORANCE -- Acts 3:19
4. Paul persecuted the church in IGNORANCE -- I Tim. 1: 13,15 -- with a good conscience (Acts 23:1), and thought he ought to do "*many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*" --Acts 26:9
  - (1) Paul said while he acted in the sin of IGNORANCE he was the chief of sinners -- I Tim. 1:15
  - (2) Paul had to obey the gospel to be saved from his sins of IGNORANCE -- Acts 22: 16
5. Paul says Israel was lost because of IGNORANCE.
  - (1) Rom. 10: 1 - 3
6. Jesus said to the Sadducees, "*ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God*" --Matt. 22:29
  - (1) The Sadducees held to the false doctrine that there would be no Resurrection -- Acts 23: 8; Matt. 22:23
  - (2) They make an argument they thought was against the Resurrection . . .
    1. Matt. 22:24 -- Deut. 25: 5 - 6
    2. Matt. 22: 25 - 28
  - (3) The Lord showed they were IGNORANT of the Scriptures -- Matt. 22: 29 - 31
  - (4) The Lord did not excuse their false doctrine because of IGNORANCE.
  - (5) He said they do err because of IGNORANCE.

- (6) Many today do err because of IGNORANCE of the scriptures, and the Lord does not excuse them.
- (7) Notice what He said to the Pharisees and Scribes when they taught and practiced false doctrine -- Matt. 15:9
- (8) People today who practice false doctrine and are sincere, sin in their IGNORANCE of the truth -- Matt. 7: 21 - 23
- 7. Israel, in the days of Hosea, was destroyed because of IGNORANCE -- Hosea 4: 1, 6
  - (1) God did not excuse Israel's IGNORANCE.
- 8. Peter said the IGNORANT (unlearned and unstable) wrest, or twist, the scriptures to their own destruction -- II Pet. 3:16
- 9. Acts 17:30

## II. THE ESSENTIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

- 1. The Kingdom of Heaven is only for those who do the will of God -- Matt. 7:21
  - (1) Those that do the "will of man" are working "iniquity", or they are working without law and are LOST -- Matt. 7: 22- 23
  - (2) From reading Matt. 7: 22 - 23, it is evident that sincere IGNORANCE will NOT SAVE.
- 2. HOW CAN ONE KNOW THE WILL OF GOD?
  - (1) The answer is given by the Lord, "*If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself*" -- John 7:17
  - (2) It is evident from this passage that a single-minded determination to do the will of God will result in one knowing the truth.
- 3. Paul said, "*Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. . .*" -- Eph. 5:17
- 4. Paul said to the Colossians, ". . .*DO NOT CEASE TO PRAY FOR YOU, AND TO DESIRE THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING . . .*"--Col. 1:9
- 5. Paul said, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom;*" --Col. 3:16
- 6. Paul was appointed by God to "*KNOW HIS WILL*" -- Acts 22:14
  - (1) Paul said when we read we can understand His knowledge "*in the mystery of Christ*"--Eph. 3:4
- 7. We are to live "*to the will of God*" -- I Pet. 4:2
- 8. Our abiding forever is conditions upon our doing the will of God -- I John 2:17
- 9. Paul said on different occasions he would NOT have members of the church IGNORANT:
  - (1) I Cor. 10:1
  - (2) I Cor. 12: 1
  - (3) I Cor. 11:3
  - (4) II Cor. 2:11
  - (5) I Thess. 4:13

# SINNING THROUGH IGNORANCE

## Lesson Two

by Donald Townsley

### INTRODUCTION

1. We started this study and we want to study it again because it is so misunderstood today in the church.
2. When we talk about "THE SIN OF IGNORANCE" this is not a good expression -- this leaves the impression that "IGNORANCE ALONE" is sin.
3. What we are talking about is: SINNING THROUGH IGNORANCE OF GOD'S LAW

#### (1) OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

1. Lev. 4:2 "*Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done and shall do against any of them:*"
2. Num. 15:28 "*And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.*"

#### 4. EXAMPLE of sinning through IGNORANCE:

- (1) A native in Africa believes in polygamy and has 5 wives.
- (2) He is ignorant of God's law on marriage -- Matt. 19: 3 - 9
- (3) He has violated that law in IGNORANCE.
- (4) He has committed the SIN OF ADULTERY IGNORANTLY.
- (5) He did not commit the sin of ignorance, he committed the sin of ADULTERY IGNORANTLY.
- (6) He IGNORANTLY SINNED.

### I. SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF GOD'S LAW -- I John 3:4

1. A newborn Christian is IGNORANT of many things that he must learn; his IGNORANCE ALONE IS NOT SIN; he only sins when he violates GOD'S LAW IGNORANTLY.
2. A newborn Christian many times does not understand the eldership, the work of the church, the worship and the organization of the church -- Ignorance of these things does not make him a sinner.
3. God makes allowance for GROWTH -- I Pet. 2:2; Mat. 28:20; Heb. 5: 12 - 14
4. Older Christians MUST aid the babe in Christ in growth and overcoming sin and temptation -- Gal. 6:1; Heb. 3:13; Tit. 2: 4 - 5; I Thess. 5:14
5. It is not a SIN to be ignorant, it IS A SIN to REMAIN IGNORANT of God's will -- Matt. 7: 21 - 23; Eph. 5:17; Col. 3:16; Heb. 5: 12 - 14
6. The command is to grow and understand His will -- I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 3:18; Eph. 5:17

### II. ANOTHER LESSON WE NEED TO LEARN IS THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN KNOWING THE SINS REVEALED IN THE WORD OF GOD AND IN KNOWING ALL THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Someone says, "SINCE NO ONE KNOWS ALL THE WORD OF GOD, ALL COMMIT SINS OF IGNORANCE".
2. That statement is NOT SO.

3. Sin is a transgression of the law -- I John 3:4
4. There are many things in the Bible that have nothing to do with SIN.
  - (1) The Bible is filled with history, death, genealogies, promises, and things of this nature that we must study and know, but they have nothing to do with sin.
5. The portion of the Bible that deals with duty, responsibility, sin, and transgressions are what God requires us to know -- Matt. 28: 19 - 20; Gal. 5: 19 -21; Heb. 5:14; I Thess. 5:21
6. We will never learn all the Bible and exhaust it -- but we are required by God to know ALL THE SINS OF THE WORD OF GOD -- Heb. 5:14
7. GOD DOES NOT TOLERATE SINS COMMITTED THROUGH IGNORANCE -- the reason being that KNOWLEDGE of sin, duty, and responsibility are REVEALED and can be learned by honest study.
  - (1) John 7:17
  - (2) Eph. 5:17
  - (3) Matt. 7:21
  - (4) II Tim. 2: 15
  - (5) I John 5:3
8. Remember, all the Bible is truth and we must study to learn all we can -- Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1
9. But, also remember that not all the Bible has to do with SIN.
10. We MUST know when we sin, or there is no hope for us -- John 8:21; I John 1: 8 - 9
11. Being able to KNOW when we sin is a far cry from saying one must know all the Bible.
12. I believe Christians by the thousands know when they sin, but these same Christians don't know all the Bible.

**IGNORANCE**  
**Lesson Three**  
**by Donald Townsley**

INTRODUCTION

1. I want to talk some more about the SIN OF IGNORANCE.
2. Then we will talk about the essentiality of knowledge.

I. WHEN ONE THINKS IGNORANCE CAN COVER FOR SIN, HE HAS MISUNDERSTOOD THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS GIVEN.

1. The Gospel is given to SAVE LOST MAN -- Rom. 1: 16; I Cor. 15:2; Mark 16:15 - 16
  - (1) Jesus gave no hint that sinners could be saved any other way than by obeying the gospel -- Mark 16: 15 - 16; John 3: 1 - 5; Matt. 7: 21 - 23
  - (2) No inspired man ever taught that one could be saved any other way than by the gospel.
    1. Peter on Pentecost -- Acts 2: 37 - 38
    2. Philip in the city of Samaria -- Acts 8: 12 - 13
    3. Philip and the Eunuch -- Acts 8: 26 - 39
    4. Saul (or Paul) -- Acts 9:6; Acts 22:16
    5. Cornelius -- Acts 10:2, 34 - 35, 48
    6. Paul -- II Thess. 1: 7 - 9; Rom. 1:16
  - (3) If the world was not lost without the gospel, there would have been no need for the gospel.
    1. The world was lost without it -- I John 5:19
    2. Rom. 3: 9 - 10; 23
2. The gospel is given and preached to produce faith in the hearts of men -- Mark 16:15 - 16; Acts 8: 12; Rom. 10:17; Acts 18:8
  - (1) The Faith that saves is an obedient faith -- Rom. 1:5; Rom. 16: 25 - 26; James 2: 24
  - (2) DISOBEDIENCE IS UNBELIEF
    1. To disobey Christ is to disbelieve Christ.
    2. The Old Testament reveals that DISOBEDIENCE to God is DISBELIEF of God.
      - (1) Moses' failure to do what God said is said to be DISBELIEF in God.
      - (2) Moses was guilty of the sin of DISBELIEF.
      - (3) Christ tells the condition of the disbeliever -- John 8:24
    3. Freedom from sin comes ONLY by an obedient faith -- Rom. 6: 16 - 18
    4. Only and obedient faith justifies -- Rom. 5:1; I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 17 - 18
  - (3) Thayer's lexicon gives three essentials of saving faith on page 511:
    1. *"used especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus, conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah -- the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ:" (Matt. 18:6; Mark 9:42; John 3:15; Acts 8:37; 10:43; Rom. 10:14; Gal. 2:16;)*
    2. *Saving faith is composed of (1) conviction (2) Trust and (3) obedience*
    3. *The sinner is convicted or convinced of who Christ is and of His power as the Son of God, (2) He is willing to TRUST the promises that Christ has given; (3) He is willing to obey the commands."*

3. The gospel is given to produce repentance -- Acts 11:18; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:33
  - (1) A conviction of sin produces repentance -- John 16:8
  - (2) The goodness of God leads men to repentance -- Rom. 2:4
  - (3) Godly sorrow worketh repentance -- II Cor. 7:10
4. The Gospel was given to bring about obedience -- Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15 - 16; Acts 8:12
5. Men and women are to study to understand what the will of the Lord is -- Eph. 5:17; II Tim .2: 15; Matt. 28:20
6. When we study the gospel, IGNORANCE WILL BANISH -- I Cor. 10:1; Rom. 11: 25; I Thess. 4:13