

Sins of Ignorance

Introduction:

- A. Many brethren teach that we can be forgiven of sins of ignorance without coming to a knowledge of and repenting of them. - “David realized that he had weaknesses - that he wasn’t capable of understanding and recognizing everything that was amiss in his life His request was that he might be cleansed (continuously (sic), of inadvertent and ignorant sins that he might commit while his general character was that of commitment and service to God” (Robert Waters, “Psalms 19:12).
- B. Will God forgive His erring children of sins committed in ignorance without their coming to a knowledge of them, repenting of them, and confessing them?

I. What is the issue?

A. Not:

- 1. whether or not we may sin in ignorance - Leviticus 4:1-2
- 2. whether or not we may be forgiven of sins of ignorance - Luke 23:34; Acts 2:22-23,36-38
- 3. whether or not we have to remember every act of sin - Luke 15:11-24; e.g., adulterer
- 4. whether or not we have to specifically mention every sin in confession - Luke 18:9-13

- B. Is: Must we repent of and confess our sins to be forgiven of them? - Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10; 1 John 1:9

*Hence if a man is a worker in the Lord’s vineyard and his life as a whole is one of obedience to the law of Christ, he does need to worry about the mistakes he might make which he does not realize, for the blood of Christ will take care of it and wash them away (E.M. Zerr, **Commentary** [6:279]).*

II. Old Testament Teaching Concerning Sins of Ignorance

A. The Law Concerning Sins of Ignorance - Leviticus 4 & 5; Number 15:22-29

- 1. The people did sin through ignorance. - Leviticus 4:1-3,13,22,27; 5:15; Numbers 15:24-29
- 2. Though they were ignorant, they were guilty. - Leviticus 4:13,22,27; 5:1-3,17
- 3. They had to meet the divine terms of pardon. - Leviticus 4:3,14,23,28; 5:15,18-19

B. Other Old Testament Teaching on Sins of Ignorance

- 1. Genesis 20:1-7
- 2. 1 Kings 13
- 3. Hosea 4:6

III. New Testament Teaching Concerning Sins of Ignorance

A. Blind Leading Blind - Matthew 15:14

B. Servant Who Knew Not - Luke 12:47-48

C. Those Who Crucified Christ - Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8; cf. Acts 2:22-23,36-41,47

D. Simon - Acts 8:18-23

E. Saul of Tarsus - Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:13,15; Acts 9:4-6; 22:16

F. Israel- Romans 10:1-3

G. Gentiles - Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-18

H. Eve - 1 Timothy 2:14

I. Hebrews 9:7

J. False Teachers - 2 Peter 2:12

IV. What about Psalm 19:12?

- A. David did not ask God to contradict the law under which he lived.
- B. The context shows we CAN know our sins. - Psalm 19:7-11; cf. 119:11
- C. "Secret" does not denote "ignorant." - 2 Samuel 12:12
- D. David sinned "secretly" in that:
 - 1. He attempted to hide his sin. - 2 Samuel 11
 - 2. He did not realize its consequences (David's Watergate). - 2 Samuel 12:1-14
 - 3. He did not sin in high-handed rebellion, as Saul did. - Psalm 19:13; cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-13
- E. Saul sinned presumptuously in that he rebelled. - 1 Samuel 15:1-23; cf. Deuteronomy 17:12-13
- F. His sin was great in that he lost the kingdom. - 1 Samuel 15:24-31

V. What keeps us from knowing our sins?

- A. NOT:
 - 1. inadequacy of God's word - Psalm 119:9
 - 2. inability to comprehend - Ephesians 5:17
 - 3. inability to realize what we have done - Matthew 15:18-19

B. BUT:

- 1. failure to study - Psalm 119:11
- 2. failure to examine ourselves - 2 Corinthians 13:5
- 3. pride - Proverbs 30:12-13
- 4. desire to justify ourselves - 2 Peter 2:1-2,18-19
- 5. love of money - 2 Peter 2:3
- 6. desire for popularity - John 12:42-43
- 7. comparing ourselves with others - 2 Corinthians 10:12
- 8. too much confidence in men - 1 Corinthians 4:6

VI. Consequences if Answer to Question Is "Yes."

- A. Places a Premium on Ignorance - Matthew 15:14
- B. Unscripturally Broadens Fellowship - 1 John 1:7
- C. Means Forgiveness Without Repentance - Matthew 21:28-29

VII. Questions:

- A. Which sins may we commit in ignorance and not be held guilty? - Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21
- B. If some sins or ignorance are excused, why not all?
- C. How does one tell which are and which aren't?

VIII. Answer to the Problem:

- B. The honest of heart will come to a knowledge of their sins, repent of them, and confess them. - Matthew 7:7-8; 2 Samuel 12:1-13
- C. The dishonest will not. - 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Conclusion:

- A. No, God will not forgive any sins until the sinner comes to a knowledge of his sins and repents of them. - Acts 3:14-19; 8:20-23
- B. Will you be honest and humble enough to see your sins and repent of them?