

# Northeast Church of Christ

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## From the Pen of Paul: *How Sins are "Covered"*

DAVID WROTE, "BLESSED IS HE WHOSE transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:1-2). Later, in Romans 4:6-8, Paul quotes David's statement saying that David was describing the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works (of law).

James also writes about sin being covered: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

In each of these scriptures sins are "covered" or "hidden" by removing them through proper avenues. There is a proper way to cover sin. To those on Pentecost who asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?", Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). Later, another soul, earnestly seeking to have his sins "covered," was told, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Isn't it strange that many preachers absolutely refuse to tell people what Peter and Ananias by inspiration told folks to do to have their sins covered or removed?

The Christian also has need for the covering of his sins. John, writing to Christians said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again two verses later, he writes, "If we say that we

have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (I John 1:8, 10). Since Adam and Eve brought sin into the world, none except the Christ has ever lived without sin on the earth. As children of God who sin through ignorance and weakness, we need our sins covered. John wrote, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). And again in verse nine John states, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Simon, a sorcerer who obeyed the Gospel and later sinned, was told by Peter, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Then Simon answered, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8:13-24). Later in his first epistle John would inform us, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death" (I John 5:16).

From these scriptures, it becomes apparent that: (1) Christians sometimes sin; (2) Because they sin, they need their sins covered or forgiven; (3) this is accomplished when the one who sins repents of his sins, makes confession of his sins and has faithful brethren petition God on his behalf.

And even those of us who strive diligently to "keep on walking in the light," need the

*Continued on p. 3*

***“My wife ran off and left me and said she did so because she did not love me anymore. Is this a Bible reason for divorce? Can she remarry with God’s approval?”***

GOD’S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE has not changed since Jesus lived and preached on the earth. The liberal society in which we live and the atheistic philosophy that abounds everywhere is what has changed the views of men and women on many moral issues.

God has not changed His view about people lying and stealing. It is just as sinful and wrong now as it was hundreds of years ago. God has not changed His view about fornication. It is just as sinful today as it was many years ago. God has not changed His feelings about homosexuality and lesbianism. It is still just as sinful and wrong as it always was. God has not changed his view about abortion. It is still cold-blooded murder in His holy eyes. And God has not changed His view about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is just as it was when Jesus lived.

The Bible does not sanction those who divorce their companion for drunkenness. The Bible does not support those who leave their mate and get a divorce because of laziness. The Bible does not authorize one to divorce his wife and/or husband because they no longer love them. To the contrary, the Bible commands husbands and wives to love each other (Eph. 5:22-23).

The only reason for divorce is sexual unfaithfulness (Matt. 19:9). Please keep in mind that Jesus Christ spoke these words and no man should try to put them asunder. It makes little difference about successful stories of divorced and remarried people. It makes no difference in the eyes of God of how a divorced and remarried couple love each other. God does not approve of divorce except it be for fornication (Matt. 19:9).

Most churches have their share of divorced

couples. There can be no doubt but that some have a Bible reason for remarriage, but many do not have the Bible reason. It is impossible for any man or woman to be saved while living in adultery (I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21). The preacher may sanction this unscriptural activity and dodge the issue. The church leaders may wink at it and pay it no attention. The church members may hold in high esteem those who are living in adultery, but this is no sign that God does. God does not acknowledge the marriage of people living in adultery. The laws of the land may, but God does not.

Please notice God’s law on marriage. “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress, though she be married to another man” (Rom. 7:2-3). While people may disagree with what the Bible says here and elsewhere about divorce and remarriage, it does not set aside the Word of God on the matter and make it of no effect (Matt. 15:1-6). God’s Word still stands and will until time shall be no more (Matt. 24:35). It will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

Marriage is for a lifetime in the eyes of God (Matt. 19:1-9). He does not approve of divorce and one cannot divorce without sin being involved. If two married people divorce and remarry, someone is living in sin. It could be that both are living in sin. No matter how we feel or what we think, God’s law is still right on this subject. All will acknowledge this in the day of judgment.

—Malcolm L. Hill

continual cleansing of the blood to “cleanse us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

As we sum up the things we have studied, let us note that God has provided the way for sins to be “covered” or forgiven. If the alien sinner, who has never obeyed the truth is to ever find this forgiveness of sins, he will have to follow God's plan completely. Men have devised a number of plans; however, none of them will work. Jeremiah informs us, “...the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man- to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). Men have paid no attention to Jeremiah and have tried to establish their own plan of salvation. But without

exception these plans fail miserably, bringing destruction instead of salvation (Gal. 1:6-10).

And if the Christian expects to stay cleansed by the blood, he must continue to “walk in the light.” When he fails to do this, God has even provided a way for him to have his sins forgiven so that he can be returned to fellowship with the Father.

So, it is obvious that there is a *right* way to cover sins. Next week we want to consider some *wrong ways* that men try to substitute for God's plan.

—Paul M. Wilmoth