

## Mankind and Sin

When man sinned, it severed the fellowship he had with God. "Behold Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Law is for the benefit of the society. Moses told Israel, "Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day" (Deuteronomy 6:24). Law was given to preserve. "The fear of Jehovah (which is manifested by obedience to His will, ret) prolongeth days" (Proverbs 10:27).

When man sins (and "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23), the consequence is death, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), or separation from God. Once the transgression had taken place, man's only hope was that God would intervene.

As we understand in our society that it is not those who violate the law that set the conditions of reconciliation, so it is with God. Mankind does not have the option of telling God what the conditions are regarding salvation. "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26), that God was able to redeem mankind and yet remain just in regard to the just recompense necessary for man's violation of law. God could not forgive the sins of the world, and remain just, without requiring that payment be made.

What Jesus of Nazareth did was to provide, through his death, the means by which mankind could be reconciled to God. Some may deny the need of reconciliation, but it does not eliminate the reality of such. God affirmed that Jesus is not only "a way" but "the only way" to be reconciled: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). ret