

Presenting the Study Sheet:

“What Will Be Your Eternal Destiny?”

This study sheet, “What Will Be Your Eternal Destiny?” may be used after almost any study sheet. Perhaps it is best not to present this study sheet until after the “Salvation” study sheet (Lesson 4) has been presented. The teacher will want to use this sheet when trying to get the student to consider obedience to the gospel.

Purpose

The purpose of the “Destiny” sheet is to present the consequences of obedience and disobedience, to help the learner realize how his response to Jesus will affect his eternal destiny.

Lesson in Brief

This lesson shows what sin is and that all have sinned. The destiny of the unforgiven sinner is contrasted with the destiny of the forgiven, the saved, sinner. Whether or not we are punished or rewarded depends on whether or not we obey or disobey the gospel.

Introduction

In previous lessons we studied the source of sin and death, God’s plan to save man from sin, and Jesus the way of salvation. What will be our destiny if we do not choose to obey Jesus? (Read Acts 3:23.) Accepting the will of Jesus is most important to us. Our eternal destiny depends on it. Sin is what effects our destiny. If we never sinned, we would never need to be concerned about being punished.

I. What Is Sin?

Many of us do not realize how often we sin because we do not understand what is sin. The word “sin” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *hamartia* which means “to miss the mark, fail in duty.” Sin appears many times in the Bible because sin is prominent in human history.

God has given Himself, His own nature, as the

standard by which we should live (1 Pet. 1:14-16). God created us in His likeness (Gen. 1:26, 27). When we sin, we violate the nature God gave us. We fail to fulfill God’s design for us. When we sin, we are corrupting the nature God gave us.

The Bible gives four statements concerning what is sin. The first statement we will consider, that helps us understand what is sin, was written by Paul. What does Paul state is sin? [Read Rom. 14:23.] *What is sin?* [Fill in the blank with “whatsoever is not of faith.”] Sin is doing what we are not convinced is right. When we do what the word of God says, we can act with faith that what we are doing is right, for faith comes from hearing God’s word, God’s message (Rom. 10:17). If we know what God’s word says, we can act without doubting whether or not we are doing what is right. However, we may not be certain what is right and wrong in some matters because we do not understand what God has said. When we believe something may be wrong or we doubt it is right for us to do it, but we do it anyway, we sin. What is not of faith is sin. The person who acts doubting whether or not he should act is sinning.

The second statement we will consider was written by John the apostle. What did John say is sin? [Read 1 John 3:4.] *What is sin?* [Fill in the blank with “transgression of the law.”] “Transgression” means “to go beyond the limits set by the law, to act without permission of the law.” John would *not* be writing about the law found in the Old Testament because the Christian is not under that law (Gal. 3:24, 25). John must have been writing about the “law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21), the principles taught by Jesus. The person who does not restrict his way of living by Jesus’ teaching is sinning and for this reason is judged a sinner in God’s eyes. Transgression of the law is sin.

The third statement we will consider was also written by John. What does John say is sin? [Read 1 John 5:17.] *What is sin?* [Fill in the blank with “all

unrighteousness.”] Often we consider *some* unrighteous acts as sin, but *others* that we believe are not very serious, we do not consider as sin. Regardless of the seeming seriousness or lack of seriousness of an unrighteous act, it is still sin in God’s eyes. All unrighteousness is sin. The fourth statement we will read was written by James. What does James say is sin? [Read James 4:17.] *What* is sin? [Fill in the blank with “Know to do good and do it not.”]

The first three statements concerning sin revealed that acting in the wrong way is sin. They deal with engaging in wrong acts that are wrong because we are either violating our own standards or God’s standards. Besides this, James states that failure to do the good we know to do is sin. If we know to help a needy person, to teach someone the will of God, to speak a helpful word, etc., and do not do it, we are sinning. Sin is knowing to do good and not doing the good we know to do.

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that we sin when we do what we doubt is right, do what is not permitted by the law, do any unrighteous act, and fail to do the good we know to do.

II. Are You a Sinner?

Based on what we have learned about sin, how would you judge yourself? Have you *always* done the things you knew to be right and *always* avoided doing the things you doubted? Have you *always* continued to stay within the principles Jesus taught, the law of Christ? Have you *always* refrained from every unrighteous act? Have you *always* done the good you knew you should do? If you can say “Yes” to all of these, then you have never sinned. Do you know of anyone who can truthfully say “Yes” to all these?

1. How many people are sinners? [Read Rom. 3:23.] *How many* are sinners? [Fill in the blank with “all.”] Notice that when we sin, we fall short of the glory of God, i.e., fail to have His holy nature. Remember that God has given us Himself as the standard by which we are to live. God does not lie, so we are not to lie. God does not steal, so we are not to steal. God is good to those who are not good to Him, so we are to be good to those who mistreat us (Matt. 5:44-48). We are to imitate the character of God. When we fail to do this, we sin. All have failed to have the holy nature of their holy Creator.

2. If all are sinners, then are any righteous? [Read Rom. 3:10.] *How many* are righteous? [Fill in the blank

with “none.”] God alone is righteous. None of us is righteous.

3. If we say that we are righteous and have never sinned, what does God say about us? [Read 1 John 1:8.] *What* is said about us? [Fill in the blanks with “deceive ourselves” and “truth.”] If we say that we have no sin, we are not being honest with ourselves. We all have sinned. God clearly states that we have sinned (Rom. 3:23). The one who says he has *not* sinned is calling God a liar (1 John 1:10) and is not in any way changing his situation of being a sinner, but is rather only deceiving himself. He is not facing up to the truth, so does not have the truth in him.

You would not want to say that you have *not* sinned, would you? When I consider God’s standard of sin, I must face up to the fact that I am a sinner. Would you admit that you have sinned?

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that all of us are sinners. We all have violated God’s standards and have failed to be like Him in all we do.

Your Destiny

That all have sinned is a *fact*. There are no non-sinners. We are either unforgiven sinners, or we are forgiven sinners, i.e., saved sinners. Which are you, a forgiven sinner or an unforgiven sinner? If you are unforgiven, what will be your destiny; and if you are saved, what will be your destiny?

What will Jesus say to those on the left hand? [Read Matt. 25:41.] He will say depart into *what*? [Fill in the blank with “everlasting fire.”] How long will the fire last? Evidently the fire will never be put out (Mark 9:48). If the fire is never put out, then the punishment must continue forever. Would the fire continue if the punishment does not continue? Both the fire and punishment are “everlasting” (Matt. 25:41, 46).

In contrast to the “everlasting fire” and “eternal punishment” of the condemned, what will the saved receive? [Read Matt. 25:46.] *What* does Jesus say that those on the right hand will receive? [Fill in the blank with “life eternal.”] The *life* is as eternal and everlasting for the righteous as will be the *fire* for the unrighteous. Would you rather have everlasting fire or eternal life?

What will the wicked be doing in the everlasting fire? [Read Rev. 14:11.] The smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever, and they will *not have what* from the torment? [Fill in the blank with “no rest.”] The torment will be continuous. Those in

the fire will have no rest from the effects of the fire. Will it be *literal* fire? This may be an important question, but we may not know for sure the answer. However, if the fire is not literal fire, the use of the word "fire," at least, helps us realize that the torment is going to be as severe as if we were in fire.

In contrast to the punishment of the unforgiven, what will the saved be doing? [Read Rev. 14:13.] *What* will they get to do? [Fill in the blank with "rest."] Notice that those who will *rest* are those who are "in the Lord." Who is in the Lord? From the "Salvation" sheet we learned that we get into the Lord, into Jesus, by being baptized (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). [On the back illustrate and discuss again how to get into Christ. Contrast the destiny of the saved, which is heaven with the destiny of the lost, which is hell. See page 6.]

Sinners who are not forgiven will not get to rest from their punishment. How does Jesus say they will be reacting? [Read Matt. 25:30.] *How* will they be reacting? [Fill in the blank with "weeping, gnashing teeth."] A friend of mine told me about a truck accident he witnessed. His arrival was just as the truck burst into flame. He could see the driver trapped inside with contorted face grinding his teeth in pain as he desperately sought to open the door to escape the torment of the fire. Those who are being punished with the eternal fire will be weeping and grinding their teeth in pain.

Contrasting to this, the saved, even though they may have gone through difficult times in this life, will have a different experience in the life to come. What will their life be like? [Read Rev. 21:4.] *What* will they never experience again? [Fill in the blank with "no more sorrow or crying."] All unpleasant feelings of the past will have ended. They will have no sorrow and never will cry again.

The sinner who is unforgiven will have no joy in his punishment. What will he have instead? [Read Rom. 2:9.] *What* will he have? [Fill in the blank with "tribulation, anguish."] These two words indicate that the sinner will experience not only external pain but will also have an intense internal agony.

Instead of such fearful discomfort, the saved sinner will be blessed. What will be the reaction of the saved to their reward? [Read Matt. 25:23.] *What* will they enter? [Fill in the blank with "joy."] The reward of the righteous will be eternal happiness with no sorrow or pain.

Jesus left this world of sin, sorrow, and death to be with the Father in heaven (John 20:17), the eter-

nal (2 Cor. 4:18) non-physical spirit dwelling place of God. Can the unforgiven sinner ever get to be with Jesus? [Read John 8:21.] *What* will he not be able to do? [Fill in the blank with "cannot go to Christ."]

Will this be true of the person who is saved? [Read John 14:3.] *With whom* will he get to be? [Fill in the blank with "be with Christ."] The fact that the one who dies in his sins can never go to be with Jesus must imply that if he had been forgiven of his sins he can be with Jesus. Such a statement is meaningless if even the saved will not get to be with Jesus because they are limited in habitation to an eternal earth separated from the eternal home of Jesus. The saved will get to be with Jesus (John 12:26).

What will be the eternal habitation of the wicked? [Read Matt. 10:28.] *Where* will they be? [Fill in the blank with "hell."] The word "destroy" here does not mean annihilate as some falsely teach, but rather means *ruin the structure* as indicated by the same Greek word in Matt. 9:17. The wine bottles would be destroyed, i.e., ruined. Hell will not be a place of annihilation, but instead will be a place of eternal ruin, of everlasting destruction of those who go there (2 Thess. 1:9). Eternal punishment will be the destiny of the unforgiven sinner.

Instead of being in hell, where will the saved person live eternally? [Read 1 Pet. 1:3, 4.] *What* is reserved for the saved? [Fill in the blank with "heaven."] All the saved will get to be with Jesus in heaven.

Look again at the punishment of the sinner. He cannot be with Jesus, but instead he will be in hell in tribulation and anguish where he will have no rest from weeping and gnashing his teeth because of the everlasting fire.

In contrast to this destiny, notice the saved. The saved person will be with Jesus in heaven where he will have joy with no more sorrow or crying. He will get to rest from all his labors and enjoy eternal life with God.

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that the eternal destiny of the saved and the sinner will be totally different. The saved will get to experience the joys of heaven forever, while the sinner will be suffering the agony of torment created by the everlasting fire.

IV. What Determines the Destiny

Can we help determine our destiny? Who will be punished? [Read Rom. 2:8.] Who will be punished? [Fill in the blank with "obey not the truth."]

Is this a consistent teaching of the Bible? [Read 2 Thess. 1:8.] *Who* will be punished? [Fill in the blank with “obey not the gospel.”]

If these will be punished, who do you think will be rewarded? [Read Matt. 7:21.] *Who* will enter the kingdom? [Fill in the blank with “does will of the Father.”] *Whom* will Jesus bless? [Read Heb. 5:9.] *To whom* will Jesus give eternal salvation? [Fill in the blank with “obey Him.”]

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that if we do *not* obey the truth that has come through Jesus (John 1:17), we will be punished eternally; but if we obey Him, we will receive eternal salvation.

Summary

This has been an important lesson, for in it we studied what we can do to have an enjoyable eternal destiny.

I. *What is sin?* Sin is doing what we doubt is right, transgression of the law, all unrighteousness, and failure to do the good we know to do.

II. *Are you a sinner?* Yes. We all are sinners.

III. *What will be the destiny of the sinner and of the saved?* The sinner will suffer punishment in hell void of the presence of Jesus and God. The saved person will enjoy the presence of Jesus and God forever in heaven.

IV. *Your destiny will be determined by whether or not you do what?* Your destiny will be determined by whether or not you obey the truth Jesus has brought us.

Will you get to be in heaven with Jesus? Are you saved? If you are not saved, what do you need to do to be saved? Why not obey the Lord now and live for Him? You have all to gain and nothing valuable to lose if you obey Him. Why not obey right now? If you ever plan to obey Jesus, now is the best time to obey. After you obey, you can have confidence that Jesus will be with you and help you through the Spirit (Eph. 3:16) to live so that you can be with Him throughout eternity. Don't you want the happiness of daily fellowship with Jesus now, and the joys of eternity with Him after this life is over? What decision do you think Jesus wants you to make? Are you ready to go right now to be buried with Jesus in baptism?

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WHAT WILL BE YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY?

I. What is sin?

_____ Rom. 14:23
_____ 1 John 3:4
_____ 1 John 5:17
_____ James 4:17

II. Are you a sinner?

1. For _____ have sinned. Rom. 3:23
2. There is _____ righteous, no, not one. Rom. 3:10
3. If we say that we have no sin, we _____
and the _____ is not in us. 1 John 1:8

III. What will be the destiny of the sinner and of the saved?

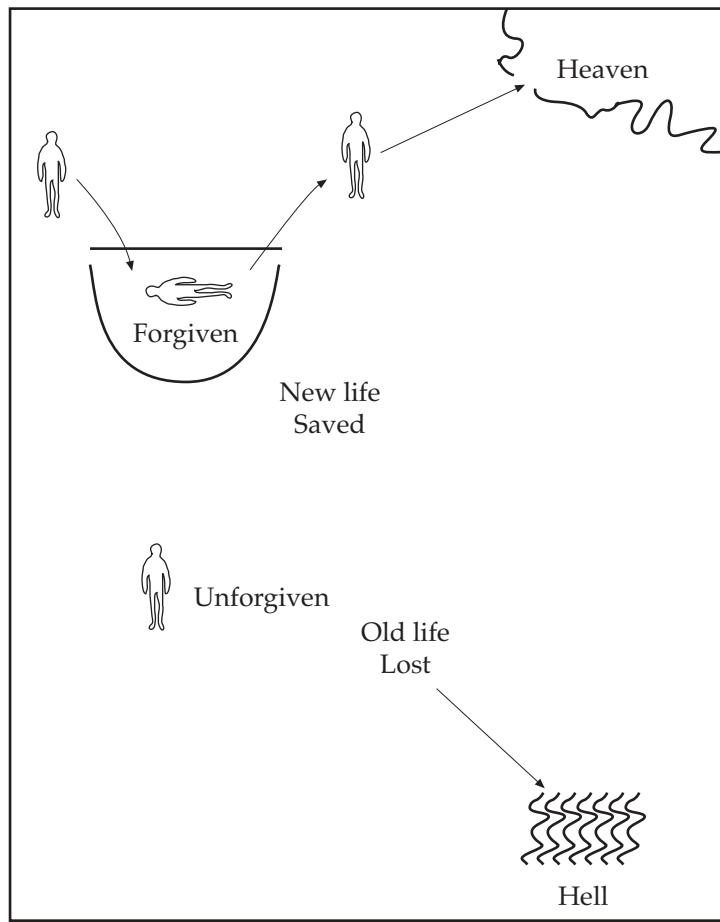
SINNER

SAVED

_____	_____
Matt. 25:41	Matt. 25:46
_____	_____
Rev. 14:11	Rev. 14:13
_____	_____
Matt. 25:30	Rev. 21:4
_____	_____
Rom. 2:9	Matt. 25:23
_____	_____
John 8:21	John 14:3
_____	_____
Matt. 10:28	1 Pet. 1:3, 4

IV. Your destiny will be determined by whether or not you do what?

_____	_____
Rom. 2:8	Matt. 7:21
_____	_____
2 Thess. 1:8	Heb. 5:9



The Drawing for the Back of the "Destiny" Sheet.
(See page 5.)