

Christians are people who are given the first part of this new human life. When they believe on Jesus Christ, then the Spirit of God gives them a new human spirit like the human spirit of the resurrected Jesus. Christians outwardly live in a world still alienated from God, yet inwardly they are part of a new creation, a new universe that will be visibly unveiled at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Outwardly Christians decay away like everything else in this world, but inwardly they grow stronger every day as they enjoy a renewed intimate relationship with the Living God. Because of this restored friendship with the Holy God, (1 John 2:15-17)

Christians are now able to behave in a holy, unselfish, God-pleasing way. According to the Bible good behaviour comes after a person has been reconciled to God, and is not truly possible before that. (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-10)

Conclusions

In Islam, sin or wrong-doing stands at the edge of its teaching. Islam means submission to the will of Allah. The problem of past sin is resolved in present obedience to Allah's will, nothing more. This is because there is no intimate relationship between Allah and his creatures. He stands far above all human relationship or association, and is concerned only with his will being perfectly obeyed in his world.

For Christianity, sin is a central part of its teaching. The effects of sin are unfathomable. The Gospel is centred upon the radical remedy for sin which is focused on the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. The problem of past sin, supremely Adam's sin, can never be solved by any amount of good behaviour now. The damage is done, the divorce has taken place. The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a list of laws, but it is an offer to repair the relationship between God and man that is broken by sin.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Isaiah 1:18

And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. "Acts 10:39 –43

This pamphlet was compiled by an interdenominational group of evangelical Christians concerned with Muslim-Christian dialogue.

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If thou wert in doubt as to
what We have
revealed unto thee, then ask
those who have been
reading the Book from be-
fore thee....
(Surah 10, verse 94)

WHAT DID ADAM DO WRONG?

*But Satan whispered evil To him: he said, O Adam!
Shall I lead thee to The Tree of Eternity And to a
kingdom That never decays? In the result, they both Ate
of the tree, and so Their nakedness appeared To them:
they began to sew Together, for their covering, Leaves
from the Garden: Thus did Adam disobey His Lord, and
allow himself To be seduced.
Sura 20:120-121*

A Christian Perspective

In the Biblical account God created Adam first, then Eve out of Adam. He created them in His own image and gave them dominion over the whole earth. The Garden of Eden was part of this world, whereas in the Qur'an the Garden is not. God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan deceived Eve into eating from this tree. However, Adam was not deceived. He ate of the tree simply because Eve gave him the fruit in full knowledge of the evil he was committing. Then they both became aware of their nakedness. God walked through the garden in the evening and called out to Adam. He blamed Eve and Eve blamed Satan. God pronounced judgment and punishment upon His creatures. Eve was cursed with the pain of childbirth and male domination. Adam's curse brought death, weeds, decay and drudgery into the whole creation. God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden.

The Nature and Consequences of Sin

The Bible teaches that this world was created perfect but has become full of pain, death, decay, disease and corruption because of the sin of Adam. Human beings were created good, but became corrupted, not just in the outward body which is now subject to death, but also in the inward heart which has become full of darkness, selfishness and evil. Sin is not just broken laws, but is the very corruption of life and creation itself. When anything or anyone falls under the power of sin and evil they are never left unaffected. Sin corrupts, enslaves, perverts, decays and eventually kills. Because Adam and Eve submitted to Satan they became enslaved to the power of sin. Due to their selfish desires, free and open friendship with God was ruined. God could not tolerate their presence any longer, though He had made them in His image to be His friends, even His children.

Adam's sin was not primarily the breaking of God's commandments, but the breaking of God's friendship. God called out for Adam because the first thing He focused on was the broken relationship. By hiding from his former friend Adam revealed that sin was like a divorce initiated by him. Adam knew he had betrayed the One who had come down to the garden to walk and talk with him. The trust and intimacy that had bound him to his Maker were gone and could not be restored with a simple word of forgiveness. The wounds of a friend always strike deepest and are the hardest to heal. This corruption and alienation from God is passed on to all of Adam's offspring, down to today. In the rest of the Bible we see God in various ways seeking to draw His beloved humanity back into relationship with Himself.

Answering the Problem of Sin

The Bible declares, sin is the fundamental problem, not just with humanity, but with the universe itself. To break off relationship with God is much more than mere disobedience: it is to be cut off from life, health, vitality, peace, joy, safety and happiness. (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 3:23; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 8:21-22). When Adam and Eve distrusted God, following Satan rather than their Friend, they caused a breach in the stability of the universe. Initially God and Adam walked and talked together in a complete intimate relationship (Genesis 3:8-9). Once sin was committed that relationship was impaired. God could no longer walk and talk with Adam and Eve, and banished them from His presence. Divorced from their Friend, the Creator; humans cannot maintain their integrity but inevitably fall into death, decay, selfishness, disease, suffering and pain. Because all sinful life leads inexorably to death and decay, the only answer for the sin that had divorced humanity from God was the death of everything and the beginning of a new humanity and a new universe.

In the Old Testament God shows that sin finds its goal only in death and hell. (Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 5:22-23)

In the New Testament we find God the Son taking on an earthly, historical life, being born of the virgin Mary and living a life of perfect intimacy with His Father through the Spirit of God. When Jesus died He put the whole world to death in Himself. He bore in Himself all the death and corruption that sin produces and killed it in His own death. (I Peter 2:21-24) But when He rose from the dead, He was not the same as He had been before. He had a new body far more powerful and unconfined than His old human body.

Restoring the Relationship

This new human life revealed at the resurrection of Jesus Christ is in perfect intimate friendship with God. In the death of Christ the serious issue of sin is resolved, and in the resurrection of Christ our broken relationship with God is finally restored. Life in Jesus Christ is as if the sin of Adam, and all his descendants, had never happened. Jesus Christ is the Creator of a better human race and of a far more glorious universe. The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:17-19