

# The "What If" Theory

What if a person who is a good Christian and is living an exemplary righteous life were to get angry at someone in a weak moment and lose his temper and sin. Then, while still in a rage, he suffers a heart attack and dies on the spot. Will he not be saved when Jesus comes for the righteous? Wasn't he a righteous man who was simply caught up in sin? Wouldn't God understand this and let the sin slide and cover it with His righteousness?

“But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned:** in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.” Ezekiel 18:24, 26

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” Exodus 32:33

But aren't we told that “The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.” Steps to Christ 57. This quote is not saying that a little sin here and there is not a problem. It is telling us that our character is revealed by what we habitually do. In other words by what we are doing all the time. It goes on to say, “By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.”

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. . . .” The Great Controversy p. 486.

“The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” The Desire of Ages 555

Do we have Christ's robe of righteousness covering us when there is unconfessed and unforsaken sin in our lives? No. Do we have any hope of getting to heaven without Christ's robe of righteousness covering us?

“The only hope of any man lies through Jesus Christ, who brought the robe of His righteousness to put upon the sinner who would lay off his filthy garments. . . . The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by any one after he has entered the gate of the city. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ's righteousness. . . . There will be no covering up of sins and faults to hide the deformity of character; no robes will be half washed; but all will be pure and spotless.” Sons and Daughters of God 66.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:11-14.

It is clear that we cannot enter heaven without Christ's robe of righteousness covering us. It is also clear that it is not covering us when there is unconfessed sin in our lives. So, can we be saved with unconfessed sin? Emphatically, No!

“But, But,” you say, “what about the good person who is caught up in sin and dies before he has opportunity to make it right?” This has never happened and would never happen. Yes, you heard me right, It wouldn’t happen! “But, But,” you say again, “what if Satan killed him before he had a chance to make it right?” Let me ask you. Who is in control anyway? Is it Satan or God? Believe it or not, God is in control and He would never cut someone off nor allow Satan to cut someone off before they had ample time to make the sin right. If God were to do this, the lost would have every right to accuse Him of being unfair, and that simply won’t happen. “But,” you may say, “I knew someone who was a very good person and he was cut off.” Well, you thought he was good just like the disciples thought Judas was good until he denied his Lord. What If he had died before his true character was revealed? Would you be shocked not to find him in heaven? God knows the heart and He wants to save us worse than we want to save ourselves and He will never allow anyone to be lost who could be saved if given the time.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9. It is a marvel to me that God will bear with the perversity of the children of men so long, bearing with their disobedience and yet suffering them to live, abusing His mercies, bearing false witness against Him in most wicked statements. But God's ways are not as our ways, and we will not marvel at His loving forbearance and tender pity and infinite compassion, for He has given an unmistakable evidence that this is just like His character--slow to anger, showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments.”  
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What kind of a God would give the wicked every opportunity to change their ways and then turn around and cut off a righteous man? Would you call him just, good, righteous? I don’t think so.

The life of King Saul is a good example of God’s forbearance with the sinner. “God had borne long with Saul; and although his rebellion and obstinacy had well-nigh silenced the divine voice in the soul, there was still opportunity for repentance. But when in his peril he turned from God to obtain light from a confederate of Satan, he had cut the last tie that bound him to his Maker; he had placed himself fully under the control of that demoniac power which for years had been exercised upon him, and which had brought him to the verge of destruction.” Patriarchs and Prophets 676.

The God we serve is loving and long-suffering and would not allow us to die without giving us ample opportunity to make our sin(s) right if we are so inclined, but he will not forgive sins that have not been confessed. So, this theory when put in the light of Gods long-suffering spirit towards us is totally irrelevant. How can we believe that we serve a long-suffering God yet at the same time believe that He would allow us to be cut off in our sins? Those who believe this theory, whether they want to acknowledge it or not, do not truly believe that we serve a loving long-suffering God who desperately wants to save us, and, or, they are simply wanting to excuse sin.

On the face of it, this theory would seem to support God’s perfect unconditional love for us. Since God is “not willing that any should perish.” This theory makes God’s love for us so powerful that it causes God to set aside His justice in order to save us. But God’s justice is also perfect and He will not, He can not set it aside. The wages of sin is death. That will never change. Yes, Jesus died for our sins, but He can only take the sins that we repent of and forsake. It would not be just of Him to take sins from us that we did not give Him. If He were to do that He would be taking away our free choice and forcing righteousness upon us. The bottom line is that God will not share the heart with sin. One or the other will be there but never both. We can not serve two masters. Sin is rebellion against God and God will not force Himself upon us and abide in a rebellious heart. God is not the one who leaves, it is we who

rebel and push him out. God cannot have a relationship with someone who is in rebellion against Him. Rebellion is the result of pride, which is the worst kind of sin in God's eyes.

### **How did God deal with Moses' sin?**

“Notwithstanding the fact that Moses was the meekest man that lived upon the earth, on one occasion he drew the displeasure of God upon himself. . . . The undeserved reproaches of the people which fell upon him led him for a moment to forget that their murmuring was not against him, but against God; and instead of being grieved because the Spirit of God was insulted, he became irritated, offended, and in a self-willed, impatient manner struck the rock twice saying: "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Moses revealed great weakness before the people. He showed a marked lack of self-control, a spirit similar to that possessed by the murmurers. He should have been an example of forbearance and patience before that multitude, who were ready to excuse their failures, disaffections, and unreasonable murmurings, on account of this exhibition of wrong on his part. The greatest sin consisted in assuming to take the place of God. The position of honor that Moses had heretofore occupied did not lessen his guilt, but greatly magnified it. Here was a man hitherto blameless, now fallen. Many in a similar position would reason that their sin would be overlooked because of their long life of unwavering fidelity. But no; it was a more serious matter for a man who had been honored of God to show weakness of character in the exhibition of passion than if he had occupied a less responsible position. Moses was a representative of Christ, but how sadly was the figure marred! Moses had sinned, and his past fidelity could not atone for the present sin. . . . Moses and Aaron must die without entering Canaan, subjected to the same punishment that fell upon those in a more lowly position. They bowed in submission, though with anguish of heart that was inexpressible; but their love for and confidence in God was unshaken. . . . But few realize the sinfulness of sin. . . . The cases of Moses and Aaron . . . show that it is not a safe thing to sin in word or thought or deed.

They angered him at the waters of Meribah, and it went ill with Moses on their account; for they made his spirit bitter, and he spoke words that were rash. Psalm 106:32, 33, R.S.V.

Had Moses and Aaron been cherishing self-esteem or indulging a passionate spirit in the face of divine warning and reproof, their guilt would have been far greater. But they were not chargeable with willful or deliberate sin; they had been overcome by a sudden temptation, and their contrition was immediate and heartfelt. The Lord accepted their repentance, though because of the harm their sin might do among the people, He could not remit its punishment. . . .

God had forgiven the people greater transgressions, but He could not deal with sin in the leaders as in those who were led. He had honored Moses above every other man upon the earth. . . . The fact that Moses had enjoyed so great light and knowledge made his sin more grievous. Past faithfulness will not atone for one wrong act. The greater the light and privileges granted to man, the greater is his responsibility, the more aggravated his failure, and the heavier his punishment.

Moses was not guilty of a great crime, as men would view the matter. . . . But if God dealt so severely with this sin in His most faithful and honored servant, He will not excuse it in others. . . . All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for

us, and in His strength we may conquer.” Conflict & Courage 109, 110

### **The need for restoration once the relationship has been broken.**

Sin separates the soul from God, breaks the relationship. Restoration has to take place before the relationship can go on.

“Satan was once an angel of light, but he was cast out of heaven when he became rebellious against God. Sin separates both men and angels from God. And "if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." The history of the past furnishes examples of the fate of those who persist in indifference to the provisions of salvation. God revealed his character to Moses, declaring how he would deal with the obedient and the disobedient. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."” The Signs of the Times, January 5, 1891 par. 2

“Do not forget the words of Christ, "The Father himself loveth you." John 16:27. **He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ.**

All sin . . . may be overcome by the Holy Spirit's power.” The Faith I Live By 118.

There is no need to restore something that hasn't been broken. Our sin has broken the relationship and it is only our repentance and turning away from sin that will restore the relationship. God desperately wants to, but God cannot continue the good work in us until the relationship that we have broken has been restored. Just because God didn't break the relationship doesn't mean that it isn't broken. God never breaks the relationship it is we who break it. That is why only we can restore the relationship by repentance and turning away from sin. It is our responsibility that the relationship is broken and it is our responsibility to fix it. God can and does encourage us to do so, but we have to do it. The sinner will be responsible for his being lost, not God. If I have a friend and he breaks our relationship, can I continue to try and carry on a relationship with him? Of course. I can still want relationship with him. I can still do nice things for him. Treat him nicely, do everything possible to fix the problem, but if he does not communicate with me and fix what he has broken we have no relationship no matter how badly I want it.

This may be one of the most diabolical errors that Satan has come up with, because it causes one to believe that they are still in a saving relationship while in sin. Jesus came to save us from our sins not in them. Satan knows that the longer we put off making something right the less likely we are of making it right. Pride also becomes stronger and stronger making it harder and harder to confess our wrong and get back into a saving relationship with God. Please don't let a moment pass before making a wrong right, your salvation is dependent on it.