

Sin Unto Death

The phrase “sin unto death” describes the final stage of divine discipline in which God removes from the earth the person who is totally alienated from God. The “sin unto death” is not a particular sin; but it is, rather, a mental attitude of total indifference to and rebellion against the will and purpose of God.

The spiritual condition of the person who comes under the “sin unto death” is characterized by continual and maximum carnality; and this punishment represents God’s final step of chastisement to those who are in maximum alienation from God. Only God can discern the true nature of a person’s mind, attitude, or volition; and only God knows whether a person is actually implacable and deserving of physical death.

The “sin unto death” is described as a principle in 1 John 5:16; Psalm 118:17,18; and Ezek. 18:21-32.

It is important for the Christian to understand the circumstances under which sins are not “unto death”.

First, sin which is confessed is not “unto death”. 1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:31; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 38.

Second, sin which is discontinued is not “unto death”. Heb. 12:1; Eze. 18:21-32.

Finally, the person who responds positively to divine discipline is not involved in the “sin unto death”. Heb. 12:6, cf. 12:11-15.

There are definite characteristics by which to recognize the conditions which lead to God’s applying the “sin unto death”. Persistent, unconfessed sin, sin which continues unchecked with no repentance, may bring a person under this category. Also, the person who persistently ignores Grace, warnings, and discipline may come under the “sin unto death”. Lev. 26. Then, sin which has a maximum adverse effect on other people (causing stumbling) may lead a person into severe discipline.

Some case histories of the “sin unto death”: * The case of “lying to the Holy Spirit” (Ananias and Sapphira). Acts 5:1-10. * The case of persistent carnality while sitting at the Lord’s Table, 1 Cor. 11:30,31. * The case of disobedience to the Word of God. 1 Chron.10:13,14; 1 Sam. 13:9-14. King Saul did not kill Agag although directly ordered to do so by God; he insisted on personally offering sacrifices in the place of divinely appointed priests; and he consulted a witch, itself a capital offense. * The case of self-righteousness and dependence on man which was perpetuated (case of Hezekiah). Isa. 38. The case of apostasy on the part of a believer. Num. 31:8; 1 Tim. 1:19,20.