

What is the Difference Between a Sin and an Abomination?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. I do not recall being asked this question before recently. It is refreshing to know that there will always be new questions and challenges to encourage us to grow in the faith.
 - 1. I think at the instinctive level, we note that sin is a word most commonly used to characterize doing something wrong, missing the mark, and violating the commandments of the Lord.
 - 2. Additionally, we reason that abomination has a much more powerful connotation, and thus is a much more egregious form of disobedience.
 - 3. While this is correct, it is more important to ask what the scriptures teach about the difference between sin and an abomination.
- B. Simply put, the biggest difference is in the matter of degree.
 - 1. All abominations are sins, but not every single sin, (some of which are unintentional), rises to the level of being an abomination.
 - 2. Committing abominations elicits much stronger anger, fiercer judgments, and more striking punishments from the Almighty than are seen for other forms of sin.
 - 3. Abominations have much more to do with the level of anger it creates in God and the level of punishment and judgments that will come from committing them.
 - 4. While it is true that all sins (including unintentional or inadvertent sins) will be punished, abominations appear to increase the wrath of God against the perpetrator.

I. WHAT IS SIN?

- A. Something is sin when God calls it sin.
 - 1. Sin is anything that transgresses; anything that misses the mark, that violates God's laws, commandments, instructions, or His expressed desires - 1John 3:4; Hosea 8:1; Daniel 9:11
- B. In the Biblical languages
 - 1. Hebrew: (Hebrew Strong's #02398) CHATA - "To miss; to sin; lead astray, bear the blame, fault, harm one has done, loss, offend, trespass" - Isa. 5:20-24
 - 2. Hebrew: (Hebrew Strong's #06588) PESHA - "To be destitute of the law; illegality; iniquity; to break, transgress or walk in violation of the law" - Gen. 31:36
 - 3. Greek: HARMATIA (Greek Strong's #266) "To miss the mark, to err especially morally, to sin, offend, trespass" - Rom. 3:23, 6:23
 - 4. Greek: another word for sin is ANOMIA, (Greek Strong's # 458-459) "lawlessness, iniquity" - 1John 3:4
- C. Therefore, sin is:
 - 1. The condition of being without law,
 - 2. The condition of being ignorant of the law,
 - 3. Violating or breaking the law,
 - 4. Having contempt for the law.

II. WHAT IS AN ABOMINATION?

- A. The Bible has 72 verses containing things that God considers an abomination.
- B. "An abomination in the Biblical sense is an attitude, behavior, or lifestyle that is particularly evil and detestable in the sight of God. In fact, abominations are considered by God to be so detestable that in order for God to maintain true righteousness, they incur His wrath and violent punishment. Abominations are attitudes, behaviors, or lifestyles that are so evil and detestable in the sight of God that they incite Him to great anger." (Michael Lankford)
- C. God is loving, kind, long-suffering, and merciful.
 - 1. Ex. 34:6-7; Psalm 86:15, 103:1-8; 1John 4:7-10
- D. He does not show this level of fierce anger very often, which is a good thing, because when He does, people die.
 - 1. When God says that He detests any attitude or behavior to the degree that He calls it an abomination, we must take special notice.
 - 2. This is not to suggest that other sins do not incur His anger or merit punishment, but rather abominations make Him especially angry.
 - 3. We can reason that the more angry He becomes, the less likely He will be to extend mercy to the violator.
 - 4. While a sin of ignorance or inadvertence may receive mercy, an abomination will not.

III. WHAT SINS RISE TO THE LEVEL OF ABOMINATION?

- A. The sin of the world before the flood - Gen. 6:5-7
- B. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen. 19:13, 24-25
- C. The golden calf - Ex. 32:7-10 - 3000 people died and the Lord plagued them.
- D. General forms of abominations:
 - 1. Any form of idolatry,
 - 2. Any sinful form of pride and greed,
 - 3. Any form of lust and sexual immorality,
 - 4. Anything that violates good and decent relationships between people,
 - 5. Any form of dishonesty or lying.
- E. A few specific examples:
 - 1. A false witness - Prov. 6:19
 - 2. A sower of division - Prov. 6:19
 - 3. Deliberate wickedness - Prov. 8:7
 - 4. A false measurement - Prov. 11:1
 - 5. Sacrifices offered by the wicked - Prov. 15:8, 21:27
 - 6. The lifestyles of the persistently wicked - Prov. 15:9
 - 7. The schemes of the wicked - Prov. 15:26
 - 8. The arrogant - Prov. 16:5
 - 9. Attempts to justify sin - Prov. 17:15
 - 10. Condemning the righteous - Prov. 17:15)
 - 11. The prayers of those who reject the truth - Prov. 28:9
 - 12. Corrupt civil leaders - Prov. 16:12

IV. GOD WILLS THAT EVEN THE ABOMINABLE REPENT

- A. God does not take any pleasure in the destruction of the wicked
 - 1. Ez. 18:23, 33:11
- B. His desire is always that they would repent, turn away from wickedness, and walk uprightly, so that they will be forgiven and saved
 - 1. 2Peter 3:9; 1Tim. 2:4; Acts 26:18
- C. However, when sinners refuse to turn away from wickedness, they will eventually suffer the consequences of those foolish choices.

Conclusion:

- A. The answer to any sin is to repent and appeal for forgiveness on God's terms.
- B. The time to do that is before one becomes embedded in the sin to the point that they become reprobate, unable to be reached by the word.