Intro: Some say there is no sin; others do not believe in its punishment; while others say its punishment is only temporary. So, what about sin.

I. WHAT IS SIN?

A. Transgression of God’s law.
   1. 1 John 3:4 “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”
   2. Transgression means to go across or go beyond the boundary
      a. God has set a boundary.
      b. That boundary is God’s law, the New Testament.

B. Unrighteousness.
   1. 1 John 5:17 “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”
   2. Unrighteousness is a failure to do right. The unrighteous are those who do not keep
      God’s commands or live in harmony with the Gospel of Christ.
      a. Righteousness, in its application to man, is the doing of right; the keeping of God’s
         commands, obedience to the Gospel of Christ.
      b. 1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even
         as he is righteous.”
      c. Psa. 119:172 “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are
         righteous.”
      d. Rom. 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto
         salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17For therein is the
         righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

C. A failure to do good.
   1. Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
   2. Good is that which God has ordered or ordained
   3. When we have the opportunity and ability to do good, and do not do it, it is sin.

D. Iniquity.
   1. Isa. 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath
      laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
   2. Iniquity is a synonym for sin. It means deviation, a turning aside from the Lord’s way.

E. Suppression of conscience.
   1. Rom. 14:23 “And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is
      not of faith is sin.”
   2. The faith here under consideration is one’s own personal faith rather than “the faith” the
      Gospel of Christ.
   3. If one violates his own conscience, it is sin, even if God has not legislated concerning it.

F. Falling short.
   1. Rom. 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
   2. The basic meaning of sin is “to fall short of the mark.”
   3. In Christ’s day when an archer’s arrow fell short of the mark or target, the Greeks said
      that he had sinned.

II. TYPES OF SIN.

A. Sins of ignorance.
   1. Luke 23:34 “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his
      raiment, and cast lots.”
2. Acts 3:17 “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

3. Acts 17:30-31 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

B. Sins of Weakness
1. Rom. 15:1 “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”
2. Gal. 6:1-2 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

C. Sins of deliberate rebellion.
1. Heb. 10:25-31 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 26For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
2. Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

III. THE SINNER.
A. God pictures man, even at man’s best in life, as a sinner.
B. The Scriptures speak emphatically along this line.
1. Ecc. 7:20 “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”
2. Rom. 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
3. Gal. 3:22 “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”
4. Jam. 3:2 “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”
5. 1 John 1:8, 10 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

IV. WHAT IS THE LORD’S ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN AND THE SINNER?
A. Our Lord’s character is one of holiness.
1. The basic meaning of holiness is “apart from the earth” having reference to being set apart; free from sin and dedicated.
2. 1 Pet. 1:15-16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
3. Psa. 111:9 “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.”
4. Psa. 145:17 “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”
B. Being absolutely holy, God is totally sinless.
1. 1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
2. Deu. 32:4 “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”
3. Christ also.
   a. 2 Cor. 5:21 “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the
      righteousness of God in him.”
   b. 1 Pet. 2:22 “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:”
   c. 1 John 3:5 “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

C. God, therefore, cannot tolerate sin; He cannot look on it or be associated with it.
   1. Hab. 1:13 “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest
      thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is
      more righteous than he?”
   2. 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but
      the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

D. Yet, our Lord has a supreme love for the sinner.
   1. God desires our repentance.
      a. Eze. 33:11 “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the
         wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why
         will ye die, O house of Israel?”
      b. 2 Pet. 3:9 “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. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in
      him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
   3. Rom. 5:8 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for
      us.”
   4. As a doctor hates disease but not the diseased one, so also the Great Physician of our souls hates sin but not the sinner.

E. Nevertheless, sin must be punished. If the sinner will not separate himself from sin by God’s law of pardon, then the punishment of sin he must share.

V. THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.
   A. The Scriptures speak emphatically concerning the punishment of sin.
      1. Isa. 59:1-2 “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it
         cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face
         from you, that he will not hear.”
      2. Eze. 18:4, 20 “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine:
         the soul that sinneth, it shall die.... 20The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity
         of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall
         be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
         a. Death physically is the separation of man’s spirit from his body; Jam. 2:26 “For as the
            body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
         b. Spiritual death is the separation of the sinner from God; Isa. 59:2 “But your iniquities
            have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not
            hear.”
      3. Mat. 13:40-42 “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this
         world. 40The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that
         offend, and them which do iniquity; 41And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and
         gnashing of teeth.”
      4. Mat. 25:30, 41, 46 “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and
         gnashing of teeth.... 41Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into
         everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:... 46And these shall go away into everlasting
         punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
5. John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

6. Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
   a. The value of an article is judged by the price attached to it.
   b. The awfulness of sin is seen by the consequences God has attached with it.
   c. The service of sin is a fatal service; death.

7. Gal. 6:7-8 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
   9For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

8. 2 Thc. 1:6-9 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
   8And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.
   9In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

9. Heb. 10:26-31 “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

10. Heb. 12:25-29 “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more: I will shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are made, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29For our God is a consuming fire.”

11. Jam. 1:15 “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

12. Rev. 20:10 “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

13. Rev. 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

14. These truths are forever stamped upon the pages of God’s Divine Word. If not true, then there is no truth in all the Bible.

B. This fact, the punishment of sin, is abundantly illustrated throughout the Old Testament.

1. From the beginning of time God has dealt with man upon the principle of reward and punishment; Deu. 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

2. Adam and Eve; Gen. 3
3. Cain; Gen. 4
4. The flood; Gen 6-7
5. Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; Gen. 18-19
6. Pharaoh and Egypt; Exo. 7-12
7. Nadab and Abihu; Lev. 10
8. Moses; Num. 20
9. Achan; Jos. 7
10. Saul; 1 Sam. 15.
11. Uzzah; 2 Sam. 6
12. Consider also the nations of Israel and Judah who because of sin were carried away into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity.
13. Rom. 15:4 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
   a. Rom. 11:22 “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”
   b. Heb. 2:1-4 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, 4God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”
   c. God ever punishes sin: wherever and in whoever it be found, nationally and individually, in those who are His children and in those who are not.
   d. To be sure, these punishments were temporal, but given to cultivate within each of us a sense of responsibility to God and an appreciation for the spiritual and eternal punishment which they typify.

C. Two ways in which sin is punished.
   1. In this life.
      a. 1 Tim. 5:24 “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.”
      b. All pain, suffering, anguish, sickness, and death have come as a result of sin.
      c. Sin oftentimes bears its own fruit in this life.
         (1) Hatred provokes hatred.
         (2) Selfishness leads to isolation.
         (3) Falsehoods endanger distrust.
         (4) Drunkenness fosters misery.
      d. There is the punishment of a guilty conscience.
         (1) Rom. 13:5 “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”
         (2) John 8:7-9 “So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.”
         (3) Psa. 51:3, 12 “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.... 12Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”
      e. Separation from God and His blessings.
   2. But, sin is not always punished (visibly at least) in this life.
      a. Ecc. 8:11 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”
      b. 2 Pet. 3:3-4, 9 “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, ‘And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.... 9The 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.”

3. Nevertheless we should heed the warning presented by God.
   a. Num. 32:23 “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”
   b. There is a punishment in the life to come.

D. The nature of that punishment after death.
1. Eternal death: separation from God and His blessings.
2. Punishment of hell
3. Notice hell’s description:
   a. Mat. 25:30 “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
   b. Mat. 13:42 “And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”
   c. Rev. 14:11 “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”
   d. Rev. 20:10 “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”
   e. Mark 9:42-48 “And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter half into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”
   f. 1 Thc. 1:8-9 “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”
   g. Some may say that all this language is figurative. Such may be true, but they are figures that which is dreadfully real.

4. One word best describes it all: “everlasting.”

Conclusion: This then is the punishment of sin. To be sure, objections are offered but to no avail. Do you say the conclusion is horrible? Yes, it is. It is far more horrible than can be described. How it behooves us then to escape the punishment of hell. In this we have our first ray of hope and comfort — a way of escape has been provided by a gracious and loving God; John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

1. We should bow our knees in thanksgiving for the manifested grace of God.
2. But God is God: He must be the Supreme ruler over our souls.
3. He cannot be God without destroying sin—without punishing rebellion against His will.
4. We must serve Him and Him alone. He accepts no divided allegiance. We must obey Him or be forever lost.