

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### KNOWING THE MEANING OF WORDS IS IMPORTANT

Romans 2:12 "All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law."

Knowing the meaning of words is important. For the first time in Paul's letter to the Romans, he uses the word "sin" and "law." True, he has used words like godlessness, wickedness, and shameful lusts previously. He has written about God's pouring out His wrath upon those who are described by these words. But only now in chapter 2, verse 12 does he use the word "sin" and "law."

Today's devotional thought is focused on the first of these two words. The Greek word for sin is harmartia (ἁμαρτία.) Harmartia is actually a word taken from the military. Its military meaning is "to miss the target." It was the word shouted by the range master when a raw recruit shooting his arrows at a target missed it. When the arrow went flying over, under or to one side or the other of the target the range master would shout Harmartia.

Harmartia, as used in the Bible is defined: "to act contrary to the will and law of God—to sin, to engage in wrongdoing." God has given very specific rules for human beings to follow which are known as the Ten Commandments. These are like targets that God expects you to "hit." When you do something they strictly forbid or fail to do something they require you have "missed the target" which is what is meant with the use of the word harmartia in the Greek New Testament.

God expects you to "hit the target" He has created. He expects you to hit the "bulls-eye" every time. He also says in the Holy Scriptures that no human being does this. All miss the target from time to time. This would seem reasonable and one would think that hitting it frequently should be good enough. Not in God's sight. He expects you to hit it perfectly every time.

The problem is, you nor no one else meets God's standards. We all miss the target. Only one has done perfectly what God expects, His Son Jesus. Jesus, in His human nature, met all of God's expectations without exception. He has hit the bulls-eye every time. Jesus did this as your substitute. Your heavenly Father accepts Jesus perfect life lived in your place as you having lived a perfect life. Through your faith in Jesus, you hit the bulls-eye every time.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for keeping all of the Ten Commandments perfectly for me. Amen.

All mankind fell in Adams fall; One common sin infects us all.  
From one to all the curse descends, And over all God's wrath impends.

Through all our pow'rs corruption creeps  
And us in dreadful bondage keeps;  
In guilt we draw our infant breath And reap its fruits of woe and death.

From hearts depraved, to evil prone, Flow thoughts and deeds of sin alone;  
God's image lost, the darkened soul Seeks not nor finds its heav'nly goal.

But Christ, the second Adam, came To bear our sin and woe and shame,  
To be our life, our light, our way, Our only hope, our only stay.

As by one man all mankind fell And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,  
So by one Man, who took our place, We all were justified by grace.

We thank You, Christ; new life is ours,  
New light, new hope, new strength, new pow'rs.  
This grace our ev'ry way attend Until we reach our journey's end.  
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