

# Does God See the sins of His People?

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*Does God See the Elect's Sin?*

By Bill Parker

**Bible Text:** Numbers 23:20-21  
**Preached on:** Sunday, March 11, 2012

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I'm glad to see each and every one of you and I invite you this morning to turn for a few minutes to the book of Numbers, Numbers 23, and I'm gonna read just a couple of verses that are a response of this man Balaam, the prophet for hire, to a king by the name of Balak. In verse 20 he says,

20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. 21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

I thought about it recently, how it seems that most preachers in our day, they're like this king Balak. It seems that they want to curse the people of God. They want to do all they can, it would seem, to make them miserable and to bring them into bondage.

I cam across a verse in Revelation 13 recently and I found that it was a principle that God has stated again and again in the Scripture where he says, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity," and that is the principle, it seems like, that most desire to do, they want to lead people into bondage and captivity, but according to the Scriptures the Gospel is good news. It's gonna be glad tidings to someone and it is glad tidings to those who are chosen of God by his grace, those who are redeemed accordingly by the blood of Christ, and called effectually by the Spirit of God, and as in this text, those names Jacob and Israel are names used many times in the Old Testament to describe what God's elect are by nature and by grace, to show what they are in Adam, in themselves, and what they are in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in ourselves and by nature conniving supplanting Jacobs, but we are at the same by grace Israel, prince and child of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So this comes to my mind, this question comes to my mind: can it be said of us what Balaam was forced to say about Israel? Look at that 21<sup>st</sup> verse, he is forced of God to say of this nation, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has he seen perverseness in Israel." In other words, the question is this: does God see the sins of his people? And when I say that, I know that the Bible speaks of God as having these holy eyes. I believe they call these expressions anthropomorphic expressions wherein God in condescending

grace speaks of himself as a man and uses these features of man and speaking of eyes that behold his people. He says by the prophet Habakkuk, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity." He is so holy and so pure that he cannot in any way look favorably on that which is not holy, on that which is sin and iniquity. He says by Job these words, "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like water!"

But my question is: does God see the sins of his people? Does he see sin in his people? I know this, I know that God is omniscient, that is, he is not only all-knowing but he is all-seeing and he surely does see the actual acts of sinning in his people. As a matter of fact, he sees them as their heavenly Father and in seeing them he sees them and therefore it says that he chastens them, and not only that but he gives us plain undeniable instructions in the Scriptures and says to us that we are to sin not. Sin not. In Romans 6 especially he says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Or again, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

But these things being true, does God in the eye of his inflexible justice, in this judicial and legal sense, does he see the sins of his people? Somebody says, "Well, you always bring in this justice or this legal sense." Well, my friends, if you are a student of the Scriptures at all, the language of God, the language of the Spirit of God is the language wherein this is the central issue, this is the central matter not only in the Gospel but in showing every work of God.

So what does he see in the sins with regard to the sins of his people? The truth of the matter is just as Balaam is forced to say of this Israel, this nation of whom the church and people of God is a type, he says, "The Lord Jehovah, he hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob," when at that very moment they were actually and really sinning, "He hath not seen perverseness in Israel," when at that moment in their own selves perverseness was all that they were, but he says, "The Lord hath not seen it," and that is the message of this book. That is the truth of God, that God does not see the sins of his people, of his believing people, and how in the world can that be, God being who he is and you and I being what we are, how could it ever be said that what was said of them can be said of us?

Well, the only way it ever could be is for God to have already seen our sins in Christ. He has viewed us in the one that he has put us in, and he has viewed our sins in Christ, him being our surety. That's a Bible word and Christ is pictured in the Scripture as our surety and the surety is far more than just the guarantor like we have in legal documents in our day. The surety rather than being the one who will come and if the loan is not paid will step in and pay it, the surety pledges himself and guarantees at the first that he will by himself pay the debt.

So it is with this view that God says that he does not see iniquity, perverseness or sin in his people because he has always viewed their sin in the Lord Jesus Christ and he has

seen their sin with the eye of this strict justice and punished their sin through the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that's what the Scripture says, and what we have is men standing in pulpits in our day and telling people not to sin and telling people – this is their message – telling them how to be better and how to improve and how to keep from sinning when it is utterly impossible for them to do that.

How many times in your life have you turned over a new leaf? How many times have you in great sincerity, how many times have you with the hardest, most ardent, human desire pledged to yourself and to God even, that you were not gonna do this anymore and that you were gonna do that anymore only to find in just a brief time that you failed? And do you know what happens? When you stand before men and women and keep telling them not to sin and you keep telling them this, that and the other that will improve them, and that there's something that they can do and change to please God, the worst they sin. That's right. That's exactly right. My little granddaughter, which I thought at the beginning would certainly be the proof positive that there was not total depravity, has gone on now to prove just the opposite, so that if she finds a little word or hears a little expression that maybe she ought not to repeat, the more you tell her not to say that, the more she's gonna say that. That's right. Why? Because that's the root and nature of a sinner.

She doesn't do that and in doing that become a sinner, she does that because she is a sinner and that's what the Scripture is teaching us, that the only way that God could accept us and receive us and save us is for him to have viewed all our sins to be on our surety and dealt with by our substitute bearing in his own body our sins on that tree, and now he doesn't see them anymore. Is that right? Is that too good to be true? It scares people to death. I'm telling you, people who rest in their works and most especially these vile false religionists and preachers who preach salvation by works, it scares them to death for somebody to say that God does not see the sins of his people in them. But I'm gonna tell you this: before a just God, he cannot see as that old hymn-writer said, he cannot see my sins in me and my sins in my substitute at the same time. Impossibility.

Paul says, "This is the Gospel, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Did you hear that? That word "impute" has something to do with charging. He has not charged the sins of his people to them. This world of people in the Lord Jesus Christ which, by the way, is not every person in this world but the world he's talking about, this world and people in Christ, God has not imputed or charged their sins to them. How in the world could he do that? He did it by charging them to Christ. He did it by charging to Christ so that this is what Paul says is committed unto us as the Gospel, he hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. What is that? That God was in Christ reconciling. God is not standing over his people with a big magnifying glass, watching their every move so when they sin, he can simply cry out to them, "Ah-ha!" No, David said that's what these unbelievers were saying to him. "Ah-ha, you've sinned! Ah-ha!" You see, no, God was in Christ reconciling us unto himself.

That's good news. That's the good news. It's so good that Paul in Romans 4, he quotes David. He says, "This is it. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." My friend, God is a just God. If he didn't impute my sins to me, if he hasn't imputed my sins to me, he can't see my sins in me. Jeremiah, this is what he said would happen, "In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." He said, "They'll be looked for. The devil will look for them, such as the Pharisees look for them, but," he said, "they won't be found." Why? "Because I pardoned them. I pardoned them in Christ."

Paul begins Romans 8 and this is what he said, "There is therefore now no condemnation." Did you hear that? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Somebody says, "Well, preacher, you forgot the rest of that verse." "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Actually in the original, that part is not there. Oh, he speaks of that a little bit later in that chapter but he begins with this statement that cannot be altered or changed, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." You say, "Well, I tell you what, I see sins in you." That's the easiest thing in the world to do, you can see sin in me. It might shock you, I might could see some in you too. But the Lord doesn't see sin in me. He doesn't see it.

Isaiah 53, this really came to me this morning when I was looking again. Isaiah 53:6, why can he not see sin in his people? He says, "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." I thought about how wonderful that word "hath" is, that way back there in Isaiah's day, I don't know how many hundred years it is from Isaiah's day to the coming of Christ, but all that way back there Isaiah the prophet led by the Spirit of God said that, "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

In Isaiah, he says, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness," bitterness, "but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Do you know where God's back is? The infinite, immeasurable, indescribable Jehovah God? I don't know where his back is. Wherever his back is, he says he's put my sins behind his back. He can't see them. He can't see them.

He says in Hebrews, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." What would it take for us to see this? I'll tell you this: it's so contrary to us by nature, grace is so contrary to us by nature, giving God glory is so contrary to us by nature the only way we'll ever see this is if he's pleased to reveal it.

He said, "I'll remember them no more," and we're always flying into this, "But what if...?" There is no "what if." You and I need contingency plans, you and I don't know what'll happen, what we'll do, but my friends, God did and he said, "I'll remember their sins no more. I'll remember their sins no more because the sacrifice of Christ has made an end of sin." A debt when it's paid and marked "paid" in the ledger book, it is no more.

This sin has been put away and made an end of it, and either the Messiah made an end of the sins of his people or he failed miserably.

He doesn't see it. But there's even a bit more. Somebody might say this is too much but there is a truth that is also declared by God to assure his glory and to ascribe to him glory as the absolute sovereign over all things, and in this to comfort his people; to comfort the Lord's people lest they in their sorrow over sin, lest they fall into despair and into depression because they can't quit sinning. You know, in the lives of just about all the Lord's people there have been things in our past or there is a constant weakness or failure in us in the present that when we think about it, even though we know they're forgiven, even though God has been satisfied as a just God in dealing, they just worry us. Do you know anything about that? Do you know that one thing that even when we're unable to believe that we did or we just can't seem to get away from that? "Why? Why did God let me live and do those things? If he's gonna save me, why did he, why did he, why did he do these things and why did I do this and why did I do that?" This is the truth: God works all things together for our good. Let me tell you something: it says "all things." Here's thinking this: even our sins? Can this holy God work even our sins without excusing them, without promoting more sinning, can it be said that not only he does not see our sins but that he yet actually worked all things together for our good and his glory?

The apostle said, "All things are of God." I'm done apologizing for God. I told some of the brethren last night the living God does not mind taking credit or blame for what he says that he is and that he's done. Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says of Christ, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will." You just sit and chew on that one for a while.

Somebody says, "Now, be careful, preacher. Be careful. You're making God the author of sin." Well, to start with, I can't make God anything. He is how he is and he's done what he's done, and most of what men fight about and kick against are things that he said he's already done. You say, "Well, I don't agree with that election stuff." Too late. He's chosen his people in Christ before the foundation of the world. "I don't like this predestination." Too late. "In love, he predestinated us unto the adoption of children in Jesus Christ according to his will." Do you see that? It's just too late. No, I'm just showing you what God says of himself and he is the sovereign King. He's running this show and he does and he has done according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say unto him, "What doest thou?" You can't stop him. You can't question him.

You know, the sooner you and I, he brings us to be confronted with that issue, you see, this is what the real issue is in everything and that's God right to be God, and men and women have heard preachers apologize about God and try to make him more palatable and say he'd never do this, he's done what he says he's done and he'll do what he says that he'll do. Even this, he says, "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." How does that fit your theology? Even the wicked for the day of evil. For himself. For himself.

But you know, when we confront that, we've naturally got a spirit like Peter's. Peter who when he began to hear Christ talk about himself, about him going up to Jerusalem, to deny. Listen to what he says, it says, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." And you know what Peter responded to that, that which would be his salvation, he responded to it in this way, it says he "took him, and began to rebuke him." He's gonna shake, rebuke God in the flesh because what God in the flesh was about to do was so contrary to his natural thinking and his natural desire, but it was the only way to save him. He said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." That's right. You see, God's eternal purpose and subsequent providence will make even the sins of men to work for the good of his people and the glory of his name and we will find out one day that our ways are not his ways. He said, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

I'm going to quickly give you one illustration of what I'm talking about. If you'll turn back to Genesis in the 45<sup>th</sup> chapter, if there was ever a man who in his life up to the point we've come to in this Scripture, he's been mistreated and abused, this man Joseph, and most especially by his brethren, and Joseph is a type of Christ, these brethren are a type of his people, and they are always in themselves doing things like this. But now I want you to listen. I don't want you to hear me but I want you to hear God as he speaks through this man. Genesis 45:5. You see, when they found out exactly who Joseph was, he didn't have the name of Joseph, Pharaoh had given him an Egyptian name, and when they found out who he really was and all the power he had and what they'd done, they got scared. They got scared.

Now you listen to what it says. Joseph says to them, he brings them near and he says, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither." That's a pretty bad thing: betray your brother, tell your daddy he's killed by a wild beast, and then sell him into slavery, throw him in a pit. "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God," do you see that? "God did send me before you to preserve life." God did it. Now listen, "For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me." No. "It was just bad luck, Joseph." No. "Just a twist of fate, Joseph." No. "Nothing but the sin of man." No. "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." This is the real kicker right here, this next verse. Hold on to your hat, Jim, this is... "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Is that too much of a God for us? That's what he said. That's what he said, "and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." God did it.

Do you remember when that man Shimei, old worthless piece of trash in David's day just like me, he ran out there when David was having to leave the city of Jerusalem, he ran out there and the Bible says he cursed David, called him a bloody man, a wretched man, and one of David's men said, "I'll take that fella's head off if you will just give me the

word." David said to him and all his servants, "Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him." What? You mean to tell me that here's God's anointed king and a scoundrel of such worthlessness has run out now and cursed him and it's the Lord that's bidden him? That's what it says.

You see, what Christ says to us and of us is the only source of true comfort. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. He does not see the sins of his people. The bridegroom looks at the bride and he says, "Thou art all fair, my love. There's no spot in you." He works all things and, my friend, even as a forgiven sinner, I'm sometimes asking myself, "Why doesn't the Lord give me grace so I could quit doing this or thinking this or that and the other?" He's not only gonna save me from all my sin but I'm gonna know more and more each day, it seems like, that the only way I could be saved is by his free grace in Christ.

God bless you.