

# CAN WE BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS – INCLUDING CHURCHES?

## quotes

### 1) Personal Responsibility

We, as individuals, are held responsible for our own sins and wrongs committed without the involvement of any other person.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, **according to that he hath done**, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....and they were judged every man according to their works." Revelation 20:12-13 (see also Daniel 7:10).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. **For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.**" Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (see also Revelation 22:11-12; Matthew 16:27, 22:11-17; Psalms 9:7-8, 50:4; Zephaniah 1:12; Romans 2:6 & 9 & 12-16; Acts 17:30-31; Mark 13:34; 2 Corinthians 11:15).

2) Many want to escape from their personal responsibility for the breaking of God's law and committing sin, and there are quite a variety of excuses. But there is NO excuse for our sins, because sin is made from choice!

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you..." Romans 6:13-14.

To yield yourself to either commit sin or instead to do righteousness unto God, involves your choice to do it. This proves that there is no excuse for sin.

"No man can plead his circumstances, his education, or his temperament, as an excuse for living in rebellion against God. **The sinner is such by his own deliberate choice.**" Signs of the Times, March 9, 1882 (vol 1, p 290) (See also October 14, 1880, June 16, 1890).

"The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. No matter how severe the pressure brought to bear upon you, **sin is your own act**. The seat of difficulty is the unrenewed heart." Adventist Home, p 331.

"It is not in the power of Satan to force anyone to sin. Sin is the sinner's individual act. Before sin exists in the heart, the consent of the will must be given, and as soon as it is given, sin is triumphant, and hell rejoices. But there is no excuse for sin, either great or little." Signs of the Times, December 18, 1893 (vol 3, p 85) (See also Maranatha, p 82 & 225; Testimonies, vol 4, p 623; This Day With God, p 318; Manuscript Releases, vol 20, p 385-386).

**3)** Others excuse themselves from personal responsibility for sin by claiming that: "Christ has already kept God's law for me, so I do not have to worry about my continued breaking of it and committing sin." But God clearly states:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4.

"You will hear the cry 'Only believe.' Satan believed and trembled. We must have a faith that works by love and purifies the heart. The idea prevails that Christ has done all for us, and that we can go on transgressing the commandments and will not be held accountable for it. This is the greatest deception that the enemy ever devised." Selected Messages, book 3, p 153.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments....If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." John 14:15, 15:10.

Every minister, church leader, and individual who have led others to believe that they can disregard any portion of God's law are held responsible for all the sins committed by those individuals who believed them!

"Those who wrest the scriptures to sustain error, greatly dishonor God, and in the day of judgment, they **will be held responsible for the disobedience of those who through their sophistries have been led to disregard the divine law.**" Review and Herald, August 13, 1959 (vol 6, p 526).

4) We are not born sinners, but are born with the tendency towards sin because of a fallen nature received from our parents. This is exactly the same nature that Jesus took upon Himself at birth.

"For verily He (Christ) took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore **in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren...**" Hebrews 2:16-17.

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, **but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**" Hebrews 4:15.

"He was ever pure and undefiled; yet **He took upon Him our sinful nature.**" Review and Herald, December 15, 1896 (vol 3, p 421).

"It was in the order of God that Christ should **take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man, that He might be made perfect through suffering, and Himself endure the strength of Satan's fierce temptations, that He might understand how to succor those who should be tempted.**" Spirit of Prophecy, vol 2, p 39 (see also Bible Commentary, vol 4, p 1147, vol 6, p 1074; Review and Herald, February 24, 1874, November 24, 1904).

Thus sin is our choice. We cannot blame anyone else, nor can we excuse ourselves for our choice to sin. There is no excuse for sin! Even Satan himself cannot find any excuse for originating sin!

"There is no excuse for sin. It will be the final condemnation of Lucifer and his angels that when God shall ask, 'Why have ye done this?' they will be able to assign no reason. And when at the last great day sinners are confronted with their sins, and are asked, 'Why did you transgress?' every mouth will be stopped. The sinful will stand speechless before God." Review and Herald, September 24, 1901 (vol 4, p 337).

5) We are not born with sinful habits, but we form them for ourselves! But regardless of how many or how few of all the sinful habits we have, we now have the choice to accept Jesus and stop sinning through His grace and strength, or to reject Jesus and cling to our sinful habits. But we cannot have both!

"The Saviour prayed for His disciples, 'Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.' But if the receiver of Bible knowledge makes no change in his habits or practices to correspond to the light of truth, what then? The spirit is warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; and one of these must conquer. If the truth sanctifies the soul, sin is hated and shunned, because Christ is accepted as an honored guest. **But Christ cannot share a divided heart; sin and Jesus are never in copartnership.**" Testimony to Ministers, p 160.

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15.

(For further insight on how we can all overcome personal sin, please see our study on The Will--Your Power of Choice at our website at [www.LightMinistries.com/SDA/Booklets](http://www.LightMinistries.com/SDA/Booklets)).

**6)** We are not only held responsible for the knowledge of the truth we now possess, but for the knowledge we neglected, as well as for that knowledge we could have possessed (see Review and Herald, July 10, 1879, May 27, 1890, February 28, 1899; Temperance p 114; Testimonies, vol 5, p 280; 1888 Materials, p 1348).

"Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There is no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth....

"Those who deliberately place themselves where they will not have an opportunity of hearing the truth, will be reckoned among those who have heard the truth, and persistently resisted its evidences." Review and Herald, April 25, 1893 (vol 3, p 42) (Bible Commentary, vol 5, p 1145).

**7)** We can be held responsible for is the way in which we hear or read God's word!

"...in the judgment every person who has ever had the privilege of hearing or reading these words will be held accountable for the way in which he has received them". Peter's Counsel to Parents, p 23.

8) We are also held responsible for following the truth of God and "**showing to the world what is the true idea of Christianity--what it is to have a Christlike life and character**" Fundamentals of Christian Education, p 298-299.

9) If we do not keep God's holy law--especially the Sabbath--we are held responsible by God.

"Men who pass on indifferently in regard to the especial claims of God's holy law, and who turn from and reject the light given upon the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and seek to ease their consciences by following traditions and customs, will be held responsible by God". Review and Herald, May 6, 1875.

10) We--especially ministers--will be held responsible "for willing ignorance and disregard of nature's laws" of health to our physical and moral nature (see Temperance, p 169; Counsels on Health, p 205-206), and also for the injury done to our body by disregarding these 8 laws (see Youth's Instructor, August 24, 1893, September 14, 1893).

11) We are held responsible "for doing our duty to God and to our fellow-men" Youth's Instructor, June 21, 1894.

12) We are held responsible for the grace and trust which God has placed upon us, and the talents and gifts which He has given us (see Matthew 25:14-30; Review and Herald, April 21, 1896, April 9, 1901; Youth's Instructor, June 8 & 15, 1893, August 5, 1897; Christ's Object Lessons, p 373; Publishing Ministry, p 233; Bible Commentary, vol 5, p 1100; Signs of the Times, November 20, 1884).

"We shall individually be held responsible for doing an iota less than God has given us ability to do." Review and Herald, April 24, 1883 (vol 1, p 351) (Christ's Object Lessons, p 362-363).

13) If we place ourselves directly in the way of work being done for God, then we are held responsible for what might have been accomplished for God's glory, as well as "all the evil that has resulted therefrom" Manuscript Releases, vol 4, p 137 (see also General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 23, 1899).

14) We are held responsible for our misused time, strength, and neglected duties!

"Have you misused your time, your strength, your influence? The despised privileges, the wasted hours, the neglected duties, are all registered in the books of heaven; and every individual must meet this record in the judgment, just as it stands." Review and Herald, April 21, 1896.

15) We are not only held responsible for all the mental faculties and powers of our mind that God has given us, but also for the improvement of these faculties!

"We should improve our faculties, and we shall be held accountable for their improvement. They are a sacred trust, and if we do not use them properly, if we do not educate ourselves to trust God, to believe and practice His word, **we shall be held accountable.**" Review and Herald, March 16, 1911 (vol 6, p 112) (see also Youth's Instructor, January 11, 1894; Review and Herald, March 7, 1893, April 25, 1893; Testimonies, vol 4, p 468-469).

16) We are not only held responsible for what we have done, but also for what we have not done.

**"Not only are we held accountable for what we have done, but for what we have left undone. We are held to account for our undeveloped characters, our unimproved opportunities."** Review and Herald, September 22, 1891 (vol 2, p 519) (Bible Commentary, vol 7, p 987; That I May Know Him, p 93).

17) We will be held responsible for the good which we might have done "but failed to perform" because we were "too careless and indolent to gain a knowledge of the will of God" Review and Herald, May 1, 1883 (see also May 1, 1888; Youth's Instructor, December 21, 1893, January 2, 1896).

18) We will also be held responsible for using means--tithe included--in any other area than for what it was intended for (see Spalding and Magan Collection, p 178; Testimonies, vol 2, p 518, vol 9, p 246-250, vol 6, p 387).

"The displeasure of God is kindled against those who claim to be His followers, yet allow consecrated workers to suffer for the necessities of life while engaged in active ministry. These selfish ones will be called to render an account, not only for the misuse of their Lord's money, but for the depression and heartache which their course has brought upon His faithful servants." Acts of the Apostles, p 340.

(For further study on the tithe subject, please see our study on The Issue of Tithe, at [www.LightMinistries.com/SDA/Booklets](http://www.LightMinistries.com/SDA/Booklets)).

19) Those who are blessed with means and property "are held responsible to see and relieve the needs of God's cause" Review and Herald, December 10, 1901.

20) If we allow ourselves to be deceived by the enemy, God holds us responsible "for failing in a faithful discharge of duty" Gospel Herald, April 1, 1905.

21) If we preach or teach others falsehood and error regarding any of the three great Gods of the Godhead, then we "will be held accountable for greatly dishonoring God"! Spalding and Magan Collection, p 332.