

COVERING

Noah's son, whose name was Ham,
 Got himself in an awful jam.
 His descendants, too, paid a
 terrible price,
 Ham did not do, what is really nice.

Noah's sin, Ham did reveal
 For that, Ham served, many a meal.



When Ham REVEALED Noah's sin instead of covering it, a prophesy placed a curse on him and his children so that they became servants of the rest of the world for many generations.

His other brothers, Shem and Japheth, received a blessing because of the way that they handled the subject of COVERING someone else's SIN.

US

We all need to be blessed by our GOD. None of us can stand to be cursed, so we need to understand how to COVER SIN when we discover it in the life of another person.

Here's the story.

NOAH'S SIN

Genesis chapter 9 says, "And (Noah) drank the wine ... he was drunken ... he was uncovered in his tent ... And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his brethren ... and Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon their shoulders, and went backwards, and COVERED the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they

saw not their father's nakedness ... Cursed be Canaan (son of Ham), a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan (son of Ham) shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan (son of Ham) shall be his servant."

Noah laid naked in a drunken stupor. That was his SIN. He knew better. He didn't have to do it. He chose to do it - and Noah SINNED. Someone said Noah put the grapes in a crock; then he got crocked



Most all of us have come across situations in the life of someone else where SIN was obvious.

The question is, "What should we do about it?" We know what Ham did. He REVEALED his father's SIN. A lot of present Christians don't see anything wrong with that. I don't suppose that Ham did either.

DIFFERENT SPIRIT

But Shem and Japheth were of a different spirit. Their solution was entirely different. When they heard about their father's SIN they refused to look upon it. I suppose that now-a-days that would be like refusing to enter into a gossip session over the telephone.

Their solution was to COVER the SIN of their father so that no one else could know about it. They hid it. They remind me of the molded figures of the three little monkeys that my natural father purchased for our mantel when I was a little tot. I remember that one had his eyes covered, another had his hands over his ears, and the last had his hands over his mouth. Molded into the base of the figures were the words, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." You may remember having seen one like it.



See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil.

That's the way Shem and Japheth acted. They COVERED the SIN and they were blessed by the prophecy because of it. But Ham, the brother who told - was cursed.

DISPUTES

Some mistaken Christians believe that JESUS taught us to REVEAL the SIN of others to the church. They base their feelings and conduct on the fact that JESUS said to "take it to the church." But, that is out of context. JESUS was not talking about SIN in the life of another Christian. He was talking about DISPUTES between two believers. He said, "If thy brother trespass against thee, to tell him his FAULT (not SIN) ... if he does not hear you (argues) then take witnesses. And if he shall neglect to hear them (the witnesses to both sides of the argument), tell it (the dispute) unto the church." (Matthew 18:16).

It is OK to talk about arguments between Christians at church (if the first steps are followed).

It is NOT OK, it's bad, it's wrong to discuss the SIN of another person (especially Christian) anywhere on this earth. Review that if you need to.

We know of cases where Christians are in an argument with each other. Some actually pray to GOD asking Him to show them what SIN is in the life of their opponent. They mistakenly reason that if they can show that there is SIN in the

life of their opponent - then that will prove that the opponent is wrong about everything. That sick way to think has become an epidemic in some places.



CURSE OR BLESS

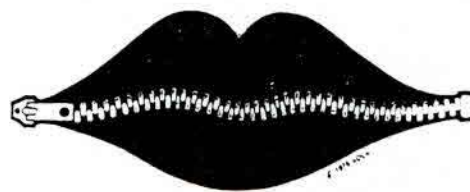
COVERING of SIN in the life of another results in a blessing for the one who COVERS. And conversely, revealing SIN resulted in a curse (in the O.T.).

The person who reveals the SIN becomes a slave to the one who COVERS the SIN, according to this Bible pattern.

It is healthy to have a normal fear of being cursed by GOD, and that's a very good reason to COVER SIN.

But, also, there is another very good reason to keep your mouth shut.

Those who COVER SIN get blessed.



DID JESUS COVER OR REVEAL SIN?

It is normal to have an uneasy feeling about this Bible teaching regarding COVERING, because most tradition teaches the opposite.

It is OK to ask, "What would JESUS DO?"

JESUS didn't have a blanket and the soldiers even took away his garment from him - at the cross. Everything was gone. There was nothing that JESUS could use to COVER the SINS of the world. Nothing, that is, except the only thing he had left - His own life's blood. And so JESUS COVERED our SINS with the only thing He had - His blood. "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). "Blessed are they whose SINS are COVERED." (Romans 4:7).

I can find many times that my savior JESUS CHRIST entered into arguments with religious leaders. I cannot find any time when JESUS revealed personal SIN in the life of the person with whom He was arguing.

JESUS COVERED the SINS of the world with His blood. That means that when our GOD looks at us, He cannot see any of our SINS because they are covered by the blood of JESUS. Our GOD does not know anything bad about our past anymore.

JESUS did such a good job of covering all SIN that now our GOD does not punish (curse) a person who uncovers sin in the life of another person. Cursing was just for the O.T. and the transition between the O.T. and the N.T. And since our GOD blesses the act of covering SIN, a mature Christian wants to get in on that act.

REVEAL SIN

Yes, there are examples in the Bible where sin was revealed and the individual was punished, notably Joshua and the Golden Wedge at Ai (Joshua 7) and also Peter and the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). We should note that in both cases a new religious move was in formation. In other words, the people had to be set in order, shaped up by law. In that case, sin was not covered, it was revealed.

Even today many church leaders are faced with the questions. Should they reveal SIN in the life of a member in order to strengthen their strongly structured society? Or, should they cover the SIN of the member in order to give the person another chance?

We all need to know of what spirit we are when we are faced with those questions.

JUDGEMENT AND CONDEMNATION

I think that it is a good idea to avoid situations of life wherein a person might be called upon to bring judgment and/or condemnation to the life of someone else.

Here's what JESUS said about it, "JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." (Luke 6:37).

That is a lot like, "He that is without SIN among you, let him FIRST cast a stone at her" (John 8:7).

In other words, people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

If you want to be COVERED you better see to it that you COVER for someone else.



APPROVE OF SIN

When JESUS elected to not bring condemnation to the adulterous woman, He was NOT approving of her sin. The priority of her needs in her future life were higher than the priority of her need to be punished for her past. JESUS elected to help her in her future rather than to use her to strengthen the present religious system. But that is hard to see. Most people still think that if you do not approve - then you surely should condemn.



GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

Our savior JESUS CHRIST also suffered unfair guilt by association.

"The son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibbler, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11:19, Luke 7:35).

JESUS justified Himself when He was falsely judged guilty by association. He said, "Wisdom is justified of (by) her children: (Matt. 1:19).

In other words, the good results that came from His associations (with banqueters) more than compensated for His personal pain He suffered from unfair guilt by association.

Anyone who offers love, mercy and forgiveness and who COVERS SIN probably will be judged guilty by association, by ignorant people.

DOES LOVE REVEAL OR CONCEAL?

Our life experiences sometime lead us down the wrong path when we think that real love is willing to hurt the object of our love, for their own good.

That strange idea about what love does was NOT shared by Peter who said, "For love shall COVER the multitude of sins." (I Peter 3:8).

It was not shared by Solomon who said, "Love COVERS all sins" (Prov. 10:12).

It was not shared by James who said, "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall HIDE a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

When our GOD offers you a chance to receive a blessing by COVERING SIN in the life of another Christian, it probably would be a good idea to align with the spirit that motivated Shem and Japheth. And remember what happened to poor old Ham.