**Giving Men Over to Sin-The Meaning**

What does it mean that God gave men over to sin and why should it be of concern to us as men?

1. **It Is Not Sin**: Since men were already sinful, giving them over to sin does not mean that God made them sinful.
2. **It is Alienation**: Giving men over to sin is described elsewhere as alienation from God. If there was no alienation, there wouldn’t have been a need for reconciliation.
   1. Cain’s story confirms that to give one over to sin is to be alienated. God warned Cain that sin wanted to have him, and the implication of the warning was that sin would eventually have Cain if Cain persisted in his sins. Therefore, we can see that to be given over to sin is to be cut off from God’s presence because this was Cain’s fate since he would not listen to God.
   2. We note, however, that sin by itself is not alienation. Cain’s sins did not automatically alienate him from God. Cain remained in Eden, God’s Presence, even though he was sinning against God until God drove him away from the land.
   3. Obviously, cut off from God’s Presence, Cain and his family had gained so much freedom to sin. Therefore, one of the meanings of being given over to sin is to be given freedom to sin against God. This freedom comes from an actual separation between God and the people. Cain left Eden. There was actual distance between God and Cain.
   4. We have other examples of this in Scriptures
      1. When Israel sinned in the wilderness, Yahweh threatened not to go with them [Exo 33:1-3]. If had gone through with this threat, the Israelites would have had far greater freedom to sin since God wouldn’t be there as a threat [Exo 20:20]. By staying away from the Israelites, Yahweh said, he would not have to destroy them *suddenly*because of their rebellions. That means they would have gotten away with many sins.
      2. Joshua also warned the Israelites not insist on serving God so that they could live their rebellious lives [Jos 24:19-22,23-28]
      3. By exiling His people, the Israelites to foreign lands, God was *sort of*alienating them from himself. God was giving them freedom to serve idols [Eze 20:39]

**How God Alienated Men from Himself**

As we have seen *above*, God gave men over to sin by removing them from himself, but how in practice did he do this?

1. **By destroying Eden, the first temple of God on earth**, in the flood. Just as He alienated Judah by destroying the Temple of Solomon [2Ki 13:23; 24:10,13,20; 25:9; 2Ch 36:19,18]
2. **By bringing them under the power rulers of the darkness of this world**. Just as when God banished the Israelites from his presence, he exiled them to foreign lands where they served other gods and kings [Deut 28:36; 2Ch 12:8].
   1. When God divided men into nations, they came under the dark powers that were in the earth [Deut 32:8; Psa 82:6-7; Eph 6:12; 2:1-2 *cf.,* Gen 3:17; Heb 2:14]. These evil powers are powers that work with Satan. These are spirits that have been rejected by God and cut off from His Presence to some extent. They have some form of organization among them with the devil being their chief. Though men had generally been cut off from God, they had some form of organization among them so too these spirits were organized though they had been cut off from God.
   2. Paul is conscious of the division of nations as a major event and juncture in the history of God and man’s relationship [Act 17:26-27 cf., 2Ch 12:8]
3. **By taking His Spirit from mankind**. Rejection by God, casting off from His Presence is associated with the taking away of the Spirit [Psa 51:11]. God gave men over to sin by withdrawing His Spirit from them [Gen 6:4-5].
   1. When God rejected king Saul [1Sa 18:12], God took his Holy Spirit from him [1Sa 16:14]. God no longer spoke to king Saul [1Sa 28:15].
   2. When God departed from Samson [Jdg 16:20], the Spirit no longer came upon him in power as he had done before [Jdg 14:6,19; 15:14,19]. Thus, he became a slave to his enemies [Jdg 16:21].
   3. God also cut off His Spirit from the Israelites and took away their prophets [Isa 29:10]. He promised, however, to restore the Spirit to them [Isa 59:21]
4. **God alienated men from himself by counting their sins against them** [2Co 5:19]. Since to reconcile them, God has to forgive their sins, it means that they were alienated from Him by him counting their sins against them. Therefore, God giving men over to sin simply means that God alienated men from himself by counting their sins against them.
   1. From this we realize that **before God alienated men, he had been protecting them from the consequence of their sins**. Adam and his family remained in Eden, though they could have been driven away from God’s presence. This shows that God had protected them. He, however, gave Cain up to sin and drove him away from His presence, banishing him from the land of Eden on account of the accusations against him by the blood of Abel.
   2. Generally speaking, when God is angry with a people, he hands them over to their enemies [Deut 32:30; Isa 50:1; Psa 44:12]. Before then, he protects them from their enemies, but when he really gets angry, he simply withdraws his protections and they are destroyed. Apparently, God did not let sin have Adam and his family, but after persistence in sin, God let Cain go. While its solution was not the most effective, the Law too was designed to protect God’s people from sin. Even the New Covenant as well is designed to save us from our sins so that our enemy, the devil, does not have us.
   3. Since God judges that those who sin deserve death [Rom 1:32], the natural step, as with Adam after his transgression [Gen 3:22-23], is to cut men off from himself so that them may not through their association with him by any chance obtain eternal life.

**Why It Should Be of Concern to Us**

It should be of concern to us because it is a major loss.

1. To be cut off from God means that we are cut off from whatever privilege or blessing that is only available by association with him. One of such privileges is the hope of eternal life. Life is a major need of human beings and it is only God that can give us eternal life [Psa 49:7-8,15]. Therefore, to be alienated from him, is pure loss and hopelessness [Eph 2:12; 4:18].
2. Being alienated from God results in darkness leading to sin and sin leads to condemnation and wrath from God [Rom 1:32;].