

INTRODUCTION TO SIN

INTRODUCTION

We continue our study of Chapter 6 of *Biblical Doctrine* which covers both *Man and Sin*. Last time, if you recall, we began our study on *Sin*, defining it through both *OT* and *NT* terms.

Why is man as he is? Why is the world as it is? The Bible has the answer: It is all due to what it calls sin.

Sometimes we may travel to other parts of the world where they have an old ruin, perhaps an old castle or hall, and you might see a notice that says, “*So and so once lived here.*”

Well the English Puritan John Howe (1630-1705) said that the notice that could be put over human beings would be: “*God once dwelt here.*”¹

Man is a ruin. He was driven out of Paradise, out of the Garden of God, eating his bread by the sweat of his brow; all of which as a result of sin.

It is our desire to understand what the Bible says about sin.

If you recall, Sin is defined in **Biblical Doctrine** in this way:

*Sin is any lack of conformity to God’s will in attitude, thought, or action, whether committed actively or passively. The center of all sin is autonomy, which is the replacing of God with self. Always closely associated with sin are its products—pride, selfishness, idolatry, and lack of peace (shalom).*²

¹ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 2.

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 454.

CONTENT

For the remainder of our time, I want to address the remaining *elements of sin* that will aid in our both understanding of sin and our attitude that we must have towards it:

1. Sin Defined
2. Sin's Relationship to Other Doctrines
3. Origen of Sin

SIN'S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCTRINES

The doctrine of sin is *inseparable* from all other biblical doctrines.³

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

The doctrine of sin is linked to God since sin is primarily against God.

David wrote in **Psalm 51:4** the following:

⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned

[חַטָּאת (*hāṭā'*) – completed action]

And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And pure when You judge.

Though David was aware he had done great harm to *Bathsheba* and *Uriah* her husband, to his *family* and *kingdom* as well as *himself*,

[**Prov. 8:36** – “*he who sins against me (Wisdom) does violence (injures/harms) to his own soul*”;
you are first to suffer from your sin],

the offense of sin was only against Yahweh.

³ *Biblical Doctrine*, 454.

The prophet Jeremiah prays in similar fashion as he intercedes for the people of Judah in **Jer. 14:7** –

⁷ “Although **our iniquities**

[עֲוֹן *avon*; *crooked behavior* which denotes both the deed and its consequences, guilt being a major consequence of the iniquity⁴]
testify against us,

O LORD, act for Your name’s sake!

Truly **our apostasies** [מְשׁוּבָה *meshubah*] have been many,

We have sinned [חַטָּא *hata*] against You.

Jeremiah knows that the drought has come because of our iniquities, our apostasies, because we have sinned against you.

We know that God is just, blameless when He judges, but Jeremiah is asking that Yahweh “act for Your name’s sake.”

His plea, is for God’s honor and glory. We are not asking for God’s justice here. If we were, we know that we would be deserving of hell, judgment, and damnation. Instead, Jeremiah is asking for mercy.

Yahweh, *you do everything for Your own sake*. Forgive us for that too will display Your glory.

David pleaded on this basis in **Ps. 25:11** –

¹¹ For Your name’s sake, O LORD, **Pardon my iniquity**, for it is great.

Only God can take the initiative to remove the enmity between man and God as we read in **2 Cor. 5:18-19** –

¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

⁴ Carl Schultz, “1577 עֲוֹן,” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 650.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

The doctrine of sin directly defines mankind as fallen. It is manifested early on.

David declares in **Ps. 58:3** –

³ The wicked are **estranged from the womb**;
These who speak falsehood wander in error from birth.

Meaning, from the womb they have gone astray. The evidence of their sinfulness is their lying.

Proverbs 22:15 declares –

¹⁵ Folly [*the trait of acting stupidly*] is bound up
in the heart of a child;
The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

The theologian **Charles Hodge** summarizes:

We are a fallen race. Our nature has become corrupted by our apostasy from God, and therefore every imagination (*i.e.*, every exercise) of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually.⁵

Sin has corrupted your relationship to God, with other people, with creation and has distorted every aspect of our being.

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

The doctrine of sin relates to the doctrine of salvation since sinners need to be rescued but are unable to save themselves.

If God did not take the initiative in salvation, no one would be saved, since sinners cannot seek Him on their own.

⁵ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 238.

Romans 3:10-12 sums up the sinner's *total inability* –

¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO
SEEKS FOR GOD;
¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME
WORTHLESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT
EVEN ONE.”

Sinners need to be rescued. Sinners need the grace of God, without it, they face His eternal wrath in hell.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

The doctrine of sin relates to Jesus Christ.

Listen to the testimony of Scripture concerning Christ in **1 Tim. 2:3-6** –

³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full
knowledge of the truth.
⁵ For there is one God, *and one mediator also between God and
men, the man Christ Jesus,*
⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the witness for this proper
time.

“*Mediator*” refers to one who intervenes between two individuals to restore peace. Here, Christ is the only mediator, and so all must go through Him (**Acts 4:12** – “*there is salvation in no one else*”).

Christ is the perfect God-man, he brings God and man together.

Q: *What did He do?*

A: He “*gave Himself as a **ransom**.*”

That word alone describes Christ's substitutionary death for us. He did not merely pay a ransom to free us; He became the victim in our place. He died our death, and bore our sin.

Note: Christ's atonement is unlimited as to its sufficiency, but limited as to its application.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

Both Satan and the fallen angels sinned against God. They disobeyed God and continue to tempt man to disobey Him.

If you recall, Satan initially deceived Eve into sinning by perverting the truth and changing Eve's thinking about God (cf. **Gen. 3:1-5**).

He and his demons continue to influence the thinking of people through blinding their minds. Paul writes in **2 Cor. 4:4** –

⁴ in whose case **the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving** so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

His aim is to prevent people from believing. If he cannot do that, he will attempt to destroy someone's initial interest in the gospel.

And if he cannot stop them from embracing the gospel, Satan strives to weaken the faith of those who do believe.

This was Paul's fear in **2 Cor. 11:3** –

³ But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be corrupted from **the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ**.

So be watchful. Draw near to Christ and to His Word. Submit therefore to God. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you* (cf. **James 4:7**). He is a defeated foe and will be punished by being made to dwell forever in the lake of fire prepared for them (cf. **Rev. 20:10**).

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The church is the community of people saved from sin in this age.

Saints/believers are saved from *the penalty of sin* in the **past**, they are saved from *the power of sin* in the **present**, and they will be saved from *the presence of sin* in the **future**.

Paul declares in **1 Cor. 1:18** –

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, **it is the power of God**.

This verse emphasizes the marvelous reality of the believer's present deliverance from sin. So as you love and trust Christ, you will know the joy of present deliverance.

THE DOCTRINE OF ESCHATOLOGY

There is a day coming when the Holy Spirit will cease to restrain sin as he does presently. A day is coming when the Church will be removed prior to "*the hour of testing, which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*" (cf. **Rev. 3:10**).

This will in motion all that the Bible promises and has foretold.

- The Tribulation Period
- The Antichrist
- The Day of the Lord
- The Second Coming of Christ
- The Millennium
- Satan's Final Revolt
- The Eternal State

ORIGEN OF SIN

SATAN

You need to know that the Bible lays the blame for the sin and death in the world on the first man, Adam. **Romans 5:12** declares –

¹² Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered into the world**, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Man then is in a fallen condition. They are guilty before God, their very nature is polluted and perverted, and they are quite helpless.

Yet what we read in Genesis 3 is that it was the *Serpent*, the fallen angel *Lucifer*, now known as *Satan*, who tempted Eve and cast doubt on God's words.

Satan's fall is described in both **Ezekiel 28** and **Isaiah 14**.

Read Ezekiel 28:11-19.

Because of his sin Satan was cast from the presence of God (**Ezek. 28:16**).

The reason for Satan's downfall was his pride; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom became corrupt (**28:17**).

The statement indicates Satan must have had extraordinarily high rank that led to his pride.

Notice what is said in **v. 15** –

¹⁵ **"You were blameless** in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness [i.e. *behavior contrary to what is right*⁶]
was found in you.

⁶ G. Herbert Livingston, "1580 עויל," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 653.

He went from being “*blameless*” to being “*unrighteousness*.”

This was what was found in Satan and thus the blame lies with him.

Isaiah 14:12–14 further describes the sin that led to his downfall. Five “I will’s” emphasize his sin (**14:13–14**). He desired to enter the very presence of God and establish his throne on God’s throne above the other angels. He wanted to be like the “Most High.” For that reason God thrust him down out of heaven.⁷

ADAM AND EVE

We covered a bit of this in our last study but it is interesting to note that there are parallels between the first two rebellions (of *Satan* and of *Adam*).

- Both sinned after being created sinless and directly experiencing God’s presence (**Gen. 3:8**).
- Both were unsatisfied with their perfect conditions, rebelliously desiring to be like their Creator (**Gen. 3:5**).

Theologians have long questioned the following: If Adam and Eve and Lucifer were all created sinless, *where did originate?*

Some would like to blame God for it all in the hardness of their heart. **James 1:13** tells us –

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and **He Himself does not tempt anyone**.

God is Holy God (**Is. 6:3**) and there is absolutely no unrighteousness in Him (**Deut. 34:4** – “*all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He*”).

It is blasphemous to speak of God as the author of sin. Adam was responsible for his actions, as was Lucifer.

⁷ Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 294.

Q: *Was Adam forced to eat the fruit against his will?*

A: No.

Adam acted knowingly, willing, for reasons sufficient for him, with no violence being done to his will.⁸

Sin occurred because Adam, as the case with Satan, chose to exercise their volition to disobey God rather than to worship Him and love Him.

Here is the key: because they were created, the capacity for sin and to exist as a possibility within them. Consequently, as creatures, they cannot escape accountability to their Creator.

The **Westminster Confession of Faith** explains:

Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:13, 2 Cor. 11:3) This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory. (Rom. 11:32)⁹

C O N C L U S I O N

My beloved, at the end of *Great Tribulation*, just before the millennial kingdom is established (ch. 20), we have this outburst of praise that fills heaven in **Rev. 19:1-4** –

¹ After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great crowd in heaven, saying, “**Hallelujah!** Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;

² **BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS;** for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and **HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS SLAVES shed BY HER HAND.”**

⁸ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), 374.

⁹ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).

³ And a second time they said, “**Hallelujah!** HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.”

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

The saints long for the evil and corruption on earth to be over.

Whatever has taken place, all of which has not taken God by surprise, it will all end in praise to God... *“Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.” Amen? Amen!*